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Methods of Teaching

JEWISH HISTORY

SENIOR GRADE

By

EDWARD N. CALISCH, Ph.D.

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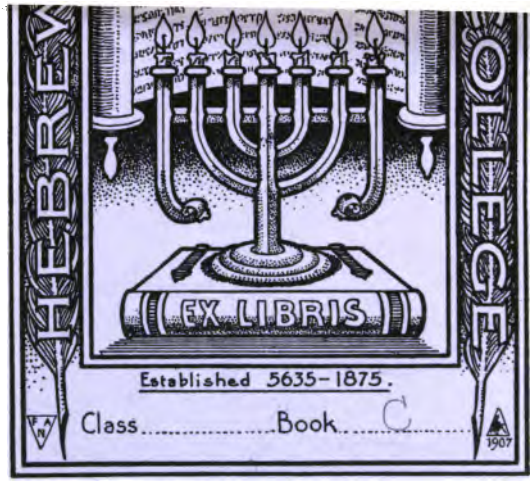

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HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS

CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TEACHERS

Conducted by
THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY

Methods of Teaching

Jewish History — Senior Grade

By EDWARD N. CALISCH, Ph.D.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Lesson	Page
	Preface	7
1.	Introduction to Book of Judges — First Three Judges	9
2.	Deborah and Barak	21
3.	Gideon	33
4.	Jephtah	47
5.	Samson	61
6.	Ruth	75
7.	Hannah and Samuel	87
8.	Samuel Anointed	97
9.	David and Goliath	111
10.	David Before Saul	123
11.	David and Jonathan	135
12.	David in Exile	147
13.	Death of Saul and Jonathan	159
14.	David as King—Hebron and Jerusalem	173
15.	Bath-Sheba—Nathan the Prophet	185
16.	Absalom	199
17.	Last Days of David—Estimate of Character	213
18.	Solomon Becomes King	225
19.	Solomon's Reign — The Building of the Temple	237
20.	The Close of Solomon's Reign—Review	251

683

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TO

PERRY FRANKEL

AS A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION

FOR INVALUABLE SERVICES RENDERED

THE JEWISH CHAUTAUQUA SOCIETY

PREFACE

THE period of history covered in this volume is one of the most important in the annals of Israel. It is very desirable that it should be rightly understood and presented by the teacher. It represents the realization of the promises given to the patriarchs, and of the purpose for which their descendants were redeemed out of Egypt. The consciousness of tribal identity, while never entirely lost, becomes, during this period, subordinated to the sense of national unity. The several tribes begin to realize that they are one people, with a common past, a common ancestry and a common heritage, a common hope and a common duty. In response to this they present, for a hundred years, a united front to their common enemies, to subdue them, and to make themselves a powerful, wealthy and formidable nation. It was the high-water mark of their national existence. Never again were the twelve tribes of Israel assembled as one nation under one government.

The political aspect of this period, in which a number of loosely cohering tribes became compacted into one people, while interesting, presents no unique phenomenon. It was an experience which the Israelites enjoyed in common with other peoples. Its spiritual significance, however, is very great. The sense of religious unity lay deep, but latent. Tremendously influenced and intensified by this century of close political cohesion, it has never since been destroyed. It survived the shocks of rebellion, subjugation and captivity. It gave impetus to the reconstruction of the second com-

commonwealth, and though often attacked and affected by foreign influences, it survived not only these, but the destruction of the political fabric itself, the very national entity and the subsequent diaspora.

It is the effort of the writer, in this volume, to bring out these facts in such manner that there may be realized the great truth that, while Israel is no less the "chosen people" of God, Israel fulfils its destiny, not through miracles, but along perfectly natural lines. It is not intended that the thought of God's guidance should in any way be minimized, but the great fact of all history should be understood that God's guidance does not manifest itself in protective interposition, but in the courage and power to do, that come to those who "seek counsel" of Him, who perform their tasks in the light of the Law and to whom "the word of God is as a lamp unto their feet."

The writer receives to give expression to his sense of gratitude to the Chancellor of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, Rev. Dr. Henry Berkowitz, and to the Dean of the Faculty of the Correspondence School, Rev. Dr. William Rosenau, whose suggestions and aid have been most helpful.

EDWARD N. CALISCH.

Lesson 1

Introduction to the Book of Judges—The First Three Judges

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EDWARD N. CALISCH.

Lesson I

Introduction to the Book of Judges—The First Three Judges

Lesson I. THE BOOK OF JUDGES—GENERAL INTRODUCTION—THE FIRST THREE JUDGES

Required Readings—Judges I-III, inclusive.

Memory Verse—"The end of the matter is, fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccles. XII: 13.) "Enter not into the path of the wicked nor step upon the way of evil doers." (Proverbs IV: 14.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that the safety and welfare of a community depend upon the establishment and maintenance of law and order, and the recognition of constituted authority. Obedience to law is the first step to freedom. Only that people can be free which has first learned to obey. The Israelites were free only as long as they obeyed the laws of God. They had obtained possession of Canaan, but they had yet to learn that the *promised* land was theirs only as *they* kept *their promises.*

Teacher's Preparation

The time covered by the Book of Judges, from the death of Joshua to the establishment of the Kingdom under Saul, was approximately two hundred years. It was a difficult and trying period of Israel's history. It was a period of adaptation to new life and conditions. The first enthusiasm of the conquest soon died down. The people were confronted with the task of maintaining the allotments assigned to them and of reaching out for new territory necessary for their growth.

Dangers Israel Had to Confront

The dangers that surrounded them were not confined to the military opposition only of the Canaanitish nations, whom they had partially subdued but not altogether driven out. There were more insidious perils in the customs and worship of these nations. The Israelites yielded to the influence of their environment only too frequently and lapsed into idolatrous practices.

The Sense of National Unity

The sense of national unity was not strong among the several tribes at the outstart. It was only the menace of common enemies that made the tribes combine on occasions for united action and resistance. It will be noticed that, with the exception of the tribes of Levi, Reuben and Simeon, each tribe is represented by at least one judge. Levi had no special possession to defend. Reuben and Simeon soon became extinct, the latter merging into the tribe of Judah, while Reuben became lost amidst its heathen surroundings, the Moabites.

Cultural Conditions

The cultural conditions of the Canaanitish nations were superior to those of the Israelites. In mingling with these nations the Israelites adopted much of their culture and were transformed from a nomadic, pastoral people into a settled community, primarily agricultural, supplemented by much industrial and commercial activity.

Influence of Continual Warfare

This transformation did not come at once or without travail. The constant fighting tended to barbarize, and much of the cruelty and fierceness and even trickery, which we will find in the course of the book, were the fruitage of the violent conditions under which they lived.

The first effect of the higher cultural condition which the Israelites acquired is noticeable in the cor-

ruption and moral debasement which luxury too often brings. For this reason we see the Israelites forsaking the worship of God and yielding themselves to the corrupt worship of their environment. This accounts, too, for their many trials and tribulations from which they made appeal to God to deliver them. Their troubles were to them as punishment for their sins. (Compare Chap. II.)

Characteristics of This Period

On the whole we might say that it was a period of development in which, *though painfully,* the people found themselves and became knitted together and prepared for the further steps of their greater progress.

The Word "Judge"

The name "Judge" (Hebrew "Shofet") while primarily meaning one who dispenses justice, is here intended to include a wider meaning. It designates those men who, in times of stress, rose up to assume leadership and became the rulers and leaders of the people. As previously indicated, a judge did not rule over all Israel, except during the time when active warfare was carried on. When peace was restored he retired to his own tribe. Nor was the judgeship hereditary. It is doubtless true that after the people were rescued from their enemies, the judge who had led them dispensed justice in his own community, for the rest of his days. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VII, pp. 377-379. Also, "Bible for Home Reading," Montefiore, Part I, pp. 170-171.)

Lesson Material

Dear children, in taking up the study of the Book of Judges, there are two things that we want to remember. The first is, that we are dealing with a time that is thousands of years ago, when the world was very young. It was a time when the people of Europe,

who are today among the greatest and most civilized nations, were savages, running about with naked, painted bodies, living in caves and worshipping images of stone and wood. In those days people did not understand the meaning of right and wrong as we do today. Nor did they know of the fine things in thought and in conduct, such as the human race has learned in many centuries of progress. For this reason, when we find in the Book of Judges things that seem to us harsh and cruel and dishonorable, we must remember that we are dealing with a period of time of very long ago. It is true that the Israelites had been taught the word of God and had been shown the nobler conduct and better life. But we will find that they forgot God and His word, and because they forgot, they became savage and barbarous, like the nations round about them. They were also punished for their sins by being given over to savage enemies. It was when they repented of their sins and cried to God to deliver them that He raised up Judges for them, to save them from their enemies. These Judges, we will find, were men who were great fighters, warriors bold, rather than great men in character. They were needed for the conditions of the times.

Secondly, we must remember, that while Joshua had been the leader of all the tribes of Israel, yet after his death the tribes did not feel themselves as one people. Like the American colonies before the Revolution, they were not united, except when they came to fight together against a common enemy. At other times each tribe was by itself, and we learn that once or twice the tribes fought against even each other. It was really too bad that the Israelites forgot that they were all children of the same ancestor and that they had become the peo-

ple to whom God had revealed His word. It was because they forgot the word of God that they separated and that much trouble and misery came to them.

There is a story told that once a lion wished to devour a calf. He made his way to where a herd of cattle was grazing in a field. He saw that they were all standing together and he could not attack them, because they would all together fight against him. He waited until they began to separate from each other, one going in one direction and one in another. When they had separated from each other, he came upon a calf, which was standing off by itself, and he easily pounced upon it and carried it away. Had the tribes of Israel remembered the word of God, which they had together received, and had they remained together in the worship of God and in obedience to His law, that which we have to learn about of their sorrow and misery, in this Book of Judges, would not have come to them.

Some time after the death of Joshua, the King of Mesopotamia came down into the land of Canaan and oppressed the Children of Israel for several years. The people cried aloud for a leader, and Jewish tradition tells us that when they asked God for a leader, He said to them that he who was pure of heart and without the stain of sin could lead them against their enemies. We find this thought also beautifully said by the Psalmist. (Read the 24th Psalm.) It was found that in the tribe of Judah, Caleb was fit to be their leader. (Who remembers what we first learned of Caleb?) (Numbers XIV: 24). But Caleb was an old man, and he encouraged Othniel, his nephew, to help him. So Othniel became the leader and the first Judge in Israel. He drove out the enemies of Israel, captured several im-

portant cities, among them the city of Hebron, and the surrounding country. During the lifetime of Othniel he judged the people, and they followed the word of God.

Then they sinned again, and the Moabites came upon them. They attacked especially the tribe of Benjamin, subdued it and caused it to pay taxes unto them. Ehud, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, was sent to Eglon, the King of Moab, to bring the taxes of the people to him. Happening to find Eglon alone, Ehud drew his sword and killed him. Then he ran to his people, called them together by the blast of a trumpet, and led them against the Moabites, who were in confusion because of the death of their king. He succeeded in driving the Moabites out of the country, and the land had peace for years.

After a while the Philistines began to plague the people, and a man named Shamgar drove them out. We do not know much about Shamgar, except that his weapon was an ox-goad. These were the first three Judges of Israel.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

A man once wanted to employ a driver for his car. A number of men applied for the position. He admitted them to his presence one by one, and he asked each the same question: "If you were driving a car on a road on the side of a high hill, how near could you drive to the edge without falling off?" Each man, one after the other, said how near he could come without falling. And each, trying to show what a fine driver he was, said he could come very, very near to the edge. At last one man said: "I wouldn't go to the edge at all. I'd keep as far away from it as I could." "You're the driver that I want," said the man. "I

don't want a man who will go near the edge of danger. I want a man who will keep as far from it as possible." If the Israelites of old had had this thought in mind, if they had tried to keep far from the dangers of immorality and idolatry, which they saw in the Canaanitish nations round about them, they would have saved themselves much trouble and sorrow. But they went near to it, and they were overcome by it. It is not a sign of true courage to court danger. It is true courage to face danger when we must, but it is a finer courage to avoid danger, especially that danger to our life which comes from evil surroundings and wicked companionship. It was the wicked companionship of the nations about them that led the tribes of Israel to forget God and to commit sin. That is what the writer of Proverbs meant when he tells us "not to enter into the path of the wicked, nor step upon the ways of the evil doer." (Prov. IV: 14.)

It is the companionship of wickedness that causes wickedness. A thing may seem to us to be dreadfully wrong at first. But if we see it again and again, its dreadfulness decreases, and we become more and more tolerant of it. An English poet (Alexander Pope) has well said:

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

No doubt when the Israelites first saw the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites, they were shocked by them. But as they lived with the Canaanites and saw their practices day after day, they became less and less shocked, until finally they took up these practices

themselves. The same temptation comes to us in our daily life. The evil that we often see we become accustomed to, and hence we are liable to forget that it is evil. Therefore, it is necessary that we should always bear in mind the law of our God, for it is a shield against temptations, and will cause us to keep far from the path of the wicked and the way of the evil-doer.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up the lesson, it is desirable to place before the children a general picture of the conditions that existed through the period of Judges. They will understand the whole Book better if they get this proper viewpoint at the outstart. Lay stress upon the thought that it was their lack of unity which laid them open to the attacks that came upon them.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write all names and verses on the blackboard. Point out on the map the location of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, where the first battles took place.

Home Work

Tissot Bible Picture No. 64. Let each child bring in for the next lesson an instance, either of history or of his own experience or reading, wherein lack of unity brought sorrow to a people or community.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the character of the period of the Judges?

2. What were the dangers surrounding Israel?

3. How far was the sense of unity developed among the tribes?

4. What were the cultural conditions of the Canaanitish nations, compared with those of Israelites? (See Course I, Lesson XVIII.)

5. What effect did these conditions have upon the Israelites?

6. What is the meaning of the term "Judge" as here used?

7. Characterize the office.

8. What, in general, was the character of the man who assumed the office?

9. In what way were the successive trials of Israel punishment for its sins?

10. To what period of individual life would you compare the period of the Judges in the communal life of Israel?

Lesson II

"Deborah and Barak"

Lesson 11. DEBORAH AND BARAK

Memory Verse—"Hear, Oh Kings, and give ear, Oh Princes, for I will sing unto the Lord, I will give praise unto the Lord, God of Israel." Judges V: 3.

Required Readings—Judges IV and V.

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that united and harmonious action, undertaken in the spirit of faith and courage, will bring happy results. The first impulse toward national unity is demonstrated in this lesson, and its influence can be oberved on the subsequent history of Israel, teaching us that that seeds of a noble action planted in one generation will give fruitage to its successors; teaching, also, that with determined effort and with faith we can accomplish things that seem to be hopelessly difficult. The aim of the narrative is also to show that the united action of the men and women in all undertakings, particularly the religious, is absolutely necessary for success. Much is made in this narrative of the unwillingness of Barak to fight Jabin unless he is accompanied by Deborah.

Teachers' Preparation

The story of Deborah is of peculiar interest. It is the second appearance in the early history of Israel of a woman as a leader and prophetess, showing that the position of woman in ancient Israel was not so restricted and narrow as general history would have us believe. The story of Ruth, whose incidents occur within this period, confirms this thought. Deborah was of the tribe of Ephraim, and seems to have been a woman of wisdom, energy and executive ability. She

was the wife of a man named Lapidoth, whose name "torchbearer" seems to have indicated some official position, possibly in connection with the sanctuary. A few authorities attempt to identify Lapidoth and Barak, "Lightning" or "Thunderbolt," but the facts seem to warrant that these two were not one, but separate men.

Conditions in Israel

Deborah evidently had been for some time preparing the people for the great conflict. Conditions were very bad in central and northern Palestine. The people had fallen into the hands of the Canaanites, who harassed them on all sides. Roadways were no longer safe. Villages were no refuge (V:7). The people were compelled to live among the hills and to use unfrequented byways. The elders of the various tribes were helpless and the people were too downcast to venture resistance. The whole population was in despair.

Work of Deborah

Into these conditions, like an ancient Joan of Arc, Deborah came with her enthusiasm and her practical sense. She aroused the spirit of the people, no doubt, by picturing to them the glories of the past. She reawakened their religious fervor by telling them of the ever-present help of God for those who called upon Him. Her fame for wisdom spread and the influence of her personality was felt far and wide. New leaders and heads of villages were selected and new hope filled the people.

Barak

The part Barak played, while commendable, yet reveals a lack of strength by reason of his reluctance to go unless Deborah accompanied him. The army of Israel, when gathered together, was assembled on Mount Tabor, one of the hills to the northwest of the

plain of Esdraelon. Word of this martial activity was given through the Kenites to Sissera, the commanding general of Yabin, the King of Canaan. Sissera assembled the army and chariots of Yabin on the plain of Esdraelon.

Esdraelon

Esdraelon was the natural battlefield of Palestine. It was about twenty to thirty miles in extent, surrounded on three sides by hills and opening on the fourth side to the Mediterranean Sea. The plain is the water-shed of the brook Kishon, which is formed by the conjunction of two smaller branches. The greater part of the valley lies between these two branches like the wedge portion in a Y. A modern traveler (R. P. Kerr, "Land of Holy Night," Richmond, 1891, p. 133) says that the place resembles a sea, undulating like the billows thereof. The plain of Esdraelon is also known as Megiddo, and one of its surrounding hills is known as Armaggeddon, or the "Hill, or City of Megiddo."

The Conflict

With the army of the Israelites on Mount Tabor and the army of Sissera with its chariots in the valley below, Deborah and Barak awaited the opportune moment. It came when a sudden torrential shower overflowed the tributaries to the main stream of the river Kishon, and converted the valley into a quagmire, rendering the chariots of the Canaanites not only useless, but really a menace to their possessors.

The Kenites

The Kenites play a strange role. They betray both sides. They were bound to Yabin by a treaty of peace, and they informed Sissera of the military activities and movements of Barak. But through kinship and friendly sentiment they sided with Israel, and Jael, the wife of their chief, betrayed Sissera.

Jael

The action of Jael is the subject of much discussion. Her conduct toward Sissera was cruelly treacherous. Was it justified as a means to an end? It might be well to discuss with the children the general topic whether the end ever justifies the means. Likewise, Deborah's praise of Jael is subject for discussion as to its appropriateness. It doubtless may be somewhat excused in the exultation of triumph and the rhapsody of song, for its effect upon the cause which was dear to her heart. The act of Jael is understood by some as one of strategy and self-defense against Sissera's invasion of the privacy of her hut.

Song of Deborah

The song of Deborah as given in Chapter V, is, like the song of Miriam at the Red Sea, a very old piece of folk-poetry. It shows a remarkable poetic power and is the source of historic information, which gives us a striking insight into the period it portrays. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 490, Vol. VII, pp. 378-9.)

Importance of the Movement

This movement under Deborah was one of the most important of the entire period of the Judges. It involved more tribes and territory than any other. (The tribes of Ephraim, Zebulon, Naphtali, Issachar, the western half of Menasseh and of Dan, as well as practically all the territory east of the Jordan and north of Judah, being engaged.) It opened the eyes of the several tribes to the advantages of union and gave the first impetus to the sense of national unity, which culminated later in the organization of the kingdom under Saul.

Lesson Material

The Plight of Israel

After the death of Ehud and Shamgar the people of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord. They fell into the hands of Yabin, the King of Canaan, who

lived at Hazor. The Canaanites oppressed the children of Israel dreadfully. They had armed chariots in their army, under the command of Sissera, and they were constantly sweeping down upon the fields and towns of Israel, taking from the Israelites their crops, their cattle and their possessions generally. It was no longer safe to go upon the highways. The fields were deserted. The villages were abandoned. The roadways were empty. The people of Israel fled to the fortified towns among the hills, using the narrow mountain passes when they had to go to and fro. The leaders of the people were downcast, and the people cried aloud in their despair unto God to help them.

The Work of Deborah

Then arose a woman named Deborah, a woman of great spirit, wisdom and energy. She went among the people, arousing their courage and awakening them to a new sense of faith and hope. She called upon Barak to gather together an army of Israelites to go against the Canaanites. Barak refused to go unless she would go with him. She said: "I will indeed go with thee, but it will not be for thy honor. For God will deliver Sissera into the hands of a woman."

The Armies Gathered

Barak and Deborah gathered together an army from the tribes of Israel and assembled them on Mt. Tabor, a high hill that overlooks the plain of Esdraelon. Sissera, the Canaanitish general, was informed of the gathering of this army. He collected his army, together with hundreds of war chariots, and took his stand in the valley of Esdraelon, for he needed level ground for his chariots.

The Battle

The river Kishon, with its tributaries, runs through the plain of Esdraelon. One day a mighty hail and rain storm fell, so that the brooks and the

river Kishon overflowed their banks and spread into the valley, making it a mass of mud and mire. Then down swept Deborah and Barak and the army of Israel upon the hosts of Canaan. Their chariots could not move. They were thrown into confusion, and Israel achieved a mighty victory in the name of the Lord.

Sissera fled from the field, and, making his way to the south, he came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite. He was tired and worn out. He asked her to let him rest in her tent. She allowed him to come in and lie down and gave him to drink. He fell into a deep sleep. Thereupon Jael took a sharp-pointed tent-peg and drove it through his temple as he lay sleeping.

With the death of his general and the defeat of the King of Canaan, the Israelites found peace and comfort for many years. Deborah sang a song of praise and triumph, which is one of the most stirring poems of the Bible.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

In the first half of the fifteenth century the English and French nations were at war. The English had crossed over and taken possession of the northern half of France, and had continued their successful invasion down to the city of Orleans, which was considered the key to Southern France. The French King, Charles, was a weak and indolent person, who saw his country being taken from him without much effort on his part to oppose. The city of Orleans was besieged by the English, and the whole country was in despair. Then a young maiden, by the name of Joan of Arc, was moved by a mighty inspiration, which stirred the depths of her very soul because of the wrongs of her

countrymen. Being of a deeply religious nature, she felt that an appeal to God would be answered. She believed that she received a favorable answer, and now full of courage and enthusiasm, being confident of the righteousness of her cause, she went to see Charles, King of France, and communicated her enthusiasm and her confidence to him. She was permitted to return to Orleans and was placed at the head of the French army. Her faith and her enthusiasm were communicated to the soldiers, with the result that the French army became victorious and the English were driven back.

So in the olden days Deborah, the Prophetess, inspired Barak to action and reawakened the spirit, the faith and the confidence of the people to such an extent that they were able to accomplish that which they could not do before. They drove the invading Canaanites out of their land. History tells us that while Joan of Arc was nominally in command of the army, it was in reality directed by experienced generals. It was no military genius on her part that led the French to victory, but the contagion of her confidence, her courage and her faith. Similarly, Barak led the army that won the victory, but it was Deborah's spirit that inspired it.

A prophet of old (Zechariah IV:6) has beautifully said, "Not by might nor by strength but by My spirit, saith the God of Hosts." We Jews do not have the power nor the might of great numbers, but we have that finer possession, "the word of our God," which should inspire us. The great conquest of civilization, the victory of truth over falsehood and of justice over tyranny is to be made, not by armies and navies, but by the spirit of God in the breasts of men. We Jews are

few in number, but it is just that work which God has given us to do; namely, that we ourselves are to feel and to hold the power of *spirit* and *faith,* and with it to inspire and teach the rest of the world.

Jewish tradition says that in the days of Deborah the misery of the people was caused by ignorance. There were no scholars in the land and no knowledge of the word or the Law of God. The people had forgotten and neglected it. But under the example and leadership of Deborah they learned again the lesson of faith, and so took courage to drive their enemies out.

We today have the same duty, to learn the lesson of faith, to acquire a knowledge of the Law of our God, and thus to get that confidence and courageous trust that will help us to fight against every sort of difficulty and to drive out every form of evil, no matter how great it may seem.

The action of Jael betraying the man who had sought protection from her was treacherous, but it was one of those things that the state of war brings about. The horror of war is not only that it brings sorrow, death and desolation, but that it brings likewise the upsetting of the moral laws which otherwise prevail. The greatest triumph of humanity will be when mankind shall have learned the lesson which the Jewish prophets teach (Isaiah II:4, and Micah IV:3), that nations "shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning knives; and nation shall not lift up swords against nation and they shall not learn any more of war."

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson to the children, the point to be emphasized is that the possession of faith

gives a sense of courage and confidence that is able to accomplish more than the might of mere numbers. It is to be applied to the life of the Jewish people, whose number in the world's population is insignificant, but the influence of whose teaching, when properly presented by the Jews themselves, is incalculably great and world-wide.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write names and verses on the blackboard. Point out Tabor and Esdraelon on the map. Draw a rough sketch of the battlefield of Esdraelon, surrounded by mountains on three sides and cut through by the Kishon and its tributaries.

Home Work

Tissot Bible Paintings No. 65. Tell the children to bring for the next lesson an incident where a woman has influenced the course of history.

QUESTIONS

1. What comment can be made on the position of women in ancient Israel, in connection with this incident of Deborah? Cite other instances.

2. What were the conditions in Israel at this time?

3. How did Deborah proceed to correct existing conditions?

4. In what way would Barak have appeared to better advantage?

5. Describe the plain of Esdraelon.

6. How would you account for the betrayal of both sides by the Kenites?

Lesson III. GIDEON

Memory Verse—"A soft answer turneth away wrath, but a bitter word stirreth up anger." Proverbs XV: 1.

Required Readings—Judges VI-IX, inclusive.

Aim of the Lesson

To show first that obedience to the moral law is the primary source of strength for a people as for an individual. Secondly, that this obedience means for a people not merely individual righteousness, but also a sense of communal welfare which necessitates the subordination of individual interests to the general good. These ideas have been taught in previous lessons. They are peculiarly strengthened by the incidents of this lesson.

Teachers' Preparation

The lesson taught by the uprising under Deborah and Barak was heeded for a short time only. Scarcely a generation passes but that peace, prosperity and luxury affect the spirit of the Israelites and lower their moral tone. The sense of national unity grows weak and the several tribes become interested only in their own peculiar affairs. This condition invites invasion from ever vigilant and active enemies who promptly take advantage of it.

The New Invasion

The invaders in this instance were the powerful Bedouin tribe of Midianites, and Israel's ancient enemy, the Amalekites. Topographical conditions furnished an added incentive.

Topographical Conditions

Palestine was not only the highway from east to west, but it was likewise a great oasis set between two deserts, that compassed it both to the south and east. The desert was the home of wandering tribes, who, with their cattle and horses, moved from place to place as convenience or necessity dictated. They were by no means averse to making raids upon the well-tilled fields of an agricultural people. They were particularly hostile and aggressive at this time. They made repeated ravages in Palestine during the harvest season. "They would cross the Jordan with their irresistible hordes, bringing with them their tents, their camels and their herds. They came like a flight of locusts, emptied the barns, led off the flocks, the herds and the asses, and then quitted the impoverished and despoiled land," only to repeat this in the following season. (See History of the Jews by Graetz, Jewish Publication Society, 1891, Vol. I, p. 62.)

The Awakening of the Spirit of Resistance

The first resistance came with the awakening of the religious spirit in Israel. A priest announced to the people that their distress was the punishment of their sin, for they had forgotten God and worshiped idols.

Significance of Gideon's First Act

It is significant that Gideon's first act as a leader was the destruction of the altar of Baal, and the surrounding grove dedicated to Ashtarte, the consort of Baal. It was the ready and clever answer of Gideon's father that opened the eyes of his towns-people to their sinful treason in following idolatry. (VI: 31-32.)

Character of Gideon

Gideon's was a strong character that commends itself to our favor. Morally and intellectually speaking, he stood higher than the other Judges. He was a man of deep religious spirit. Tradition says that he

was chosen for leadership because of his staunch championship of God when others had lapsed into idolatry. (Legends of the Jews, Ginsberg, Jewish Publication Society, 1913. Vol IV, p. 40.) Somewhat like Moses, he was modest (Judges VI: 15) and asked for a sign of Divine guidance for his mission (Ibid 17.) He was not merely a skillful general and tireless and heroic leader (VIII: 5 to 8), but he was likewise a diplomat in his answer to the complaint of Ephraim (VIII: 2). He also showed statesmanlike quality in that he brought back not merely wealth but wise administration, and set up the cities of Palestine again in a flourishing condition. He was great enough to refuse the proffered kingship, and to emphasize the sovereignty of God. (VIII: 23.)

Gideon's victories were secured in two great battles, one on the plain of Esdraelon and the other at the fords of the Jordan. His pursuit of the enemy extended beyond the Jordan to the plain east thereof.

The name Abiezer refers to the family or clan of the tribe of Menasseh to which Gideon belonged.

Zebah and Zalmunna were the two kings of the invading hosts; Oreb and Zoeb were sub-chieftains.

Ephraim's Jealousy

The complaint of Ephraim is indicative of the attitude of this tribe, which considered itself, by reason of its size and strength, as being the natural leader. It resented Gideon's leadership through jealousy, as it later quarreled with Jephtah for similar reason. The distinction given to Ophrah, Gideon's native city, over against Shechem and Shiloh, aggravated their resentment, as these two cities of Ephraim enjoyed considerable prominence. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, pp. 238-289.)

Lesson Material

After the death of Deborah the land had peace for some years. Then again the Children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and were delivered into the hands of their enemies. Their enemies this time were the two wandering and powerful Arab tribes of the Midianites and Amalekites. These tribes would come up from the desert with great numbers of herds and flocks and horses, and overrun the fields of the Israelites. They would seize all the crops, and what they did not carry away they destroyed. "They left no sustenance for Israel, neither lamb nor ox nor ass." They did this year after year at just about the harvest season, and the people of Israel were greatly impoverished.

The Call of Gideon

A prophet, whose name is unknown, told the Israelites of their sins, of the goodness of God to their fathers in the days gone by, and appealed to them to put their trust in Him. One young man named Gideon, son of Yoash, of the tribe of Menasseh, was much impressed by the prophet's words. Like Moses of old, he felt the call within him to deliver his people. One night, while threshing corn behind a wine press—for he had to hide it from the Midianites—an angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said: "The Lord is with thee. Go in thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites." Again, like Moses, Gideon was modest and said: "How shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is the weakest in Menasseh and I am the youngest in my father's house." But he was assured that God was with him. He felt that the first thing that he must do was to teach his own people the folly of their idol worship. So that night, with ten of his men, he destroyed an idol that was set up in honor of Baal, by his own father, in

the city of Ophrah, together with a grove that was dedicated to Ashtarte. In the morning, when the people saw that the idol and the grove had been cut down, they called unto Yoash and said: "Thy son Gideon hath done this thing; bring him out that he might die." But Yoash answered: "Will ye indeed fight for Baal? If Baal be God, let him contend for himself." The people saw the wisdom of this, and henceforth they called Gideon "Yerub Baal," which means, "Let Baal contend."

Choosing the Warriors

Having thus aroused the spirit of the people, Gideon called them together to attack the Midianites. A large number of men answered his call. They were too many, and not all of them suitable for his purpose. Gideon said to them, "Let all who are afraid return." (Compare Deuteronomy XX:8.) A large number went back, but they were still too many. So Gideon took them down to a stream of water and told them to drink. Some went down on their knees and lapped the water like a dog. Others stood up and lifted the water in their hands as in a cup. These latter, and there were three hundred of them, Gideon chose, for by their manner of drinking they showed that they were watchful and not to be taken unawares. All the others Gideon sent back.

The Attack on Midian

The Midianites were encamped in the valley. Gideon brought his three hundred men to the top of a hill overlooking the valley. He gave to each one of them a trumpet and an empty pitcher in which a torch was concealed. He told them that when he gave the signal each man should blow his trumpet, break his pitcher, wave his torch and cry out, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon."

The Rout of the Enemy

It was a dark night when Gideon made this attack. The Midianites, awakened from their sleep, were thrown into great confusion by the noise of the shouting and the breaking of the pitchers and by the waving of the lights. They thought, no doubt, that each one of the three hundred torches represented a whole company of men. In the confusion and darkness they started to flee, often attacking each other. Gideon with his band swept down upon them and completed the rout. The Midianites fled toward the east. Gideon pursued them, overtook them at the fords of the Jordan and defeated them a second time. Meanwhile many from the other tribes came and joined in the pursuit and destruction of the enemy.

The Quarrel of Ephraim

The tribe of Ephraim was among those that came and helped. But they complained to Gideon, saying: "Why didst thou not call us to fight with thee against the Midianites?" They were jealous of Gideon's great victory. But Gideon answered them softly, saying: "Is not the gleaning of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? Behold, God has delivered the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zoeb into your hands. What have I done in comparison to this?" The anger of the Ephraimites was turned away by this modest answer.

Gideon continued to pursue after the enemy across the Jordan. Here, tired and worn out, Gideon asked the people of Succoth and Penuel to give bread and drink to his men. But the people of these cities were afraid of the enemy and refused to do so. Telling them that he would come back and punish them, Gideon went on, overtook the enemy and gave them a third and lasting defeat, capturing two more of their chiefs, whom Gideon put to death because they had slain his brothers.

Gideon Refuses the Crown

Upon his return, the people were full of praise and gratitude for Gideon, and they wanted to make him king. But Gideon said unto them: "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you. It is God who is your King, and Who shall rule over you."

Abimelech and Jotham

During the rest of the years of Gideon's life the land had peace; but after his death, Abimelech, who was a son of Gideon, wanted to rule over the people. He hired some idle and lawless men, and at his command they put to death all of his brothers except the youngest, Jotham, who escaped. Abimelech made himself king in the city of Schechem. Then Jotham called the men of Schechem together, and, standing upon Mount Gerizim, he warned them against having a wicked man for their king, such as Abimelech was. He told them the following parable (Judges IX: 7-15):

"The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. They said to the olive tree, 'Reign thou over us.' But the olive tree answered, 'Should I leave my fatness wherewith through me they honor God and man, just to wave to and fro over the trees?' Then they said to the fig tree, 'Reign thou over us.' But the fig tree said, 'Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit to go and wave over the trees?' Then to the vine said they, 'Reign thou over us.' But the vine also replied, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, in order to wave to and fro over the trees?' Then all the trees said to the thorn-bush, 'Reign thou over us.' It said, 'If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow, and if not, let fire come out of the thorn-bush and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'"

Jotham's warning was not heeded, but his prophecy came true. During the short reign of Abimelech

there was much trouble and suffering among the people over whom he ruled. Finally the people rose up against Abimelech, and there was a civil war in the land. Abimelech was at last put to death by a stone that was thrown upon his head by a woman from a tower. Then the people departed each to his place and the land had rest.

Lesson Presentation

When George Washington had won the victory over the English army and established freedom for the American people, he refused to be made king and retired quietly to his home at Mount Vernon. Even when he had been President for two terms, he refused, and again retired to the privacy of his home. Thus, too, Gideon taught the people of Israel the lesson: first, that they should give their loyalty to God above all earthly kings; and, secondly, that any man who serves the public should do so for the good and welfare of the community, and not for his own vanity or selfish interest.

Point of Contact

Gideon's Greatest Conquest

It was really a greater thing for Gideon to have refused the crown than for him to have conquered the enemy. For the best conquest that we can make is over our own selves in governing our own desires and controlling our own spirit. The writer of the Book of Proverbs well says (XVI: 32): "He that is slow to anger is better than a hero; and he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he who conquers a city."

Obedience the Parent of Authority

Gideon was able to rule himself because he had learned to obey. Tradition tells us that Gideon was chosen to lead Israel because he was a good man and obedient son. We are reminded of Moses, who also was selected to lead because he had shown his greatness of character in little things. So Gideon, tradition

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tells us, was threshing the corn behind a wine-press to save his father's strength, as well as his property. Those who obey their parents with loving willingness learn to govern themselves and to develop strength of character and beauty of spirit.

The Loving Consideration of a Son

There is a Talmudic story of a certain man named Damah. One day the elders of Israel came to his house to buy a precious stone that he had, and which they wanted for the garment of the priest. Its price was a thousand shekels of gold. Damah went to his father's chamber to get the gem. He found his father sleeping, but his feet resting on the chest in which the gem was. He returned without it rather than awaken his father. The elders departed, but soon came back, thinking that he wanted a larger price for the stone. This they offered to pay him, but Damah declared, "If you give me this house full of gold and silver, I will not disturb my father." The elders waited and the father awoke. The son then gave them the precious stone. Having promised the higher price, the elders now counted it out. But Damah refused to take any more than the first price, saying, "I am not selling my father's honor. I wish only the value of the stone."

Gideon's Self-Control

The answer which Gideon gave to the people of Ephraim when they quarreled with him about not having called them also showed his power of self-control. He might have answered them angrily, and a bitter quarrel would have resulted, as we will learn that it actually did in another instance of similar character. We very often have occasion to act as Gideon did, to return a soft answer to an angry complaint. How fine it would be if we, like him, could always control ourselves to answer softly and avoid quarrel and promote peace!

The story of Abimelech is well taught in the parable of Jotham. A wicked ruler is a great danger to a people. A great many of the wars and much of the misery of nations have been caused by the wickedness and vanity of rulers. We are very fortunate here in the United States that we can ourselves choose the men who are at the heads of our state and national governments. It is our duty as patriotic citizens to choose only good and honorable men. If, through carelessness or selfishness, other kind of men are chosen, the people suffer the results through their own fault.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson, two points to be emphasized are, first, the superior character of Gideon as compared with other Judges; and, secondly, the fact that the misery in Israel came from its own religious laxity and weakness.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write names and verses on the blackboard. Use the map freely. Point out the places mentioned in the lesson. Show pictures or draw pictures of ancient form of wine-presses.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures Nos. 411-412. Have some one child bring in the story of the fight of Thermopylæ, where also three hundred men were matched against a tremendous host.

QUESTIONS

1. What condition in Israel invited the Midianitish invasion?
2. What other conditions added thereto?
3. What was the character of the invasion?

4. What awakened the spirit of resistance in Israel?

5. What was the significance of Gideon's first act?

6. Discuss the character of Gideon.

7. How does he compare with the other Judges?

8. What was the ground of Ephraim's complaint?

9. What constituted the importance of Schechem and Shiloh?

10. Discuss the test that Gideon used in the choice of his soldiers. Also the use of strategy in warfare.

Lesson IV

Jephtah

Lesson IV. JEPHTAH

Required Readings—Judges X, XI and XII.

Memory Verse—"It is better that thou shouldst not vow, than thou shouldst vow and not pay." (Eccl. V: 4.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach the sanctity of a promise and the consequent care with which any promise should be given. Rash promises bring unhappiness, whether in being kept under unexpected conditions or being unfulfilled because of unexpected circumstances. In the latter case the moral fibre is weakened by non-fulfillment of the pledge, no matter how much tragic conditions may excuse the non-fulfillment.

Teachers' Preparation

In this lesson we cross the Jordan to the plains east thereof. The half tribe of Menasseh, which remained east of Jordan, furnishes the theatre of action and the actor.

Gilead

The city of Gilead comes into prominence, although the name Gilead applies also to the mountain and district east of the Jordan. Its extent is undetermined, and by some authorities is taken to mean the entire district east of the Jordan occupied by the Israelites—that is, by Reuben, Gad and half of Menasseh. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V, p. 667.) There are two Judges named as coming in between Gideon and Jephtah. The second one, Jair, was also a Gildeadite; and though not much is given concerning him in the Book of Judges, yet he seems to have been a man of some prominence. He is mentioned in

Numbers XXXII: 41, and Deuteronomy III: 14, and also I Chronicles II: 22. The thirty sons mentioned (X: 4) doubtless meant thirty sub-chieftains under him, who ruled over the cities he had conquered. Riding on ass-colts, as given in the passage, was a symbol of authority.

Jephtah's Life a Picture of His Time

Jephtah presents to us in his own life a vivid picture of the low and lawless conditions that obtained. Born out of wedlock, he was driven from his father's home by the taunts of his half-brothers. Being a person of dominant quality and defiant disposition, he gathered around him a band of like spirits and became the head of a band of predatory outlaws.

The fact that the leaders of the community turned to him, the outcast, for help against the enemy evidences both the weakness of themselves and the military prowess of Jephtah. The condition he laid down to them, before assuming command, likewise tokens his character. Whereas Gideon refused the throne that was proffered to him out of gratitude, Jephtah bargains for it before he consents to help his brethren.

A Redeeming Feature

A redeeming feature of Jephtah's work was the fact that he attempted to obtain first by peaceful negotiations an understanding with the Ammonites. He displays considerable historical knowledge in his rebuttal of their claim of having been driven away from their ancestral territory by the Israelites. It is probable, however, that this passage (XI: 15-23) is an interpolation.

Jephtah's Vow

The one great feature in the history of Jephtah, and that with which his name is identified, was the sacrifice of his daughter by reason of the vow that he

had made. There is considerable difficulty in the understanding of this episode. If it be taken literally, and there seems to be no escape from it, it is remarkable that, at so late a period in the history of Israel, the sacrifice of a human being should even be considered, much less consummated. It has been explained by some that Jephtah in making his vow did not have a human being in mind, but rather some animal for sacrifice; that the passage (XI: 31) as translated, "Whatsover cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me," refers rather to animals or to material objects than to human beings. Granting even this, it does not do away with the fact that when his daughter came forth to meet him, both she and Jephtah accepted, apparently without hesitation as to the morality of it, the conclusion that the vow included even her.

It has also been explained that she was not really put to death, but that she was kept in seclusion the rest of her life. We cannot, however, minimize the force of the bald statement that upon her return from the two months' respite, her father "fulfilled on her his vow which he had vowed." (XI: 39.)

Another Evidence of Israel's Plight

Tradition says that whilst according to Jewish law Jephtah was not bound literally to carry out his vow, yet the people were ignorant of the law, and therefore she suffered. This tradition, together with the fact that so deplorable an act was committed, pictures more graphically than any extended description, the unhappy condition of the times and the low moral state to which Israel, east of the Jordan, had fallen. Personally, my explanation of the episode hinges on verse 24 of Chapter XI. There Jephtah makes concession of the power of the god Chemosh, in the recognition of him

as a god, even though it be the god of the enemy. In the worship of Chemosh, the sacrifice of human beings was not unknown (See Second Kings III:27). It is more than possible that Jephtah, born out of the law and living outside of it, was willing to go to lengths outside of the law to accomplish his purpose. The existence of the custom among the Moabites and Ammonites, with whom in the present instance the Children of Israel had to deal, made possible its practice in the present instance.

Courage of Jephtah's Daughter.

A noteworthy thing is the courage of Jephtah's daughter. When the full significance of the tragedy dawned upon him, Jephtah was overcome. But his daughter rose nobly to the occasion and accepted with sublime heroism the fate which the folly of her father and the turn of circumstance had placed upon her. (XI: 35-36.)

Lesson Material

After the death of Abimelech there were two Judges who rose up to deliver Israel from their enemies. The Bible gives us just their names and nothing more. They were Tola and Jair. After the death of the second one, the Children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord and they were delivered into the hands of the Ammonites. In the city of Gilead, in the half tribe of Menasseh that was east of the Jordan, there lived a man named Jephtah. There were other sons of Jephtah's father, but they were only half-brothers to him, as Jephtah was the son of another woman. His half-brothers quarreled with him, saying that he was not one of them, and that he had no place in his father's house. So Jephtah left his father's house, and, being a man of violent and warlike character, he gathered a band of men around him

of like spirit. They became robbers and outlaws in the land.

The Selection of Jephtah

Now when people of Ammon pressed sorely upon them, the Israelites sought for a leader to deliver them. Elders of Gilead went to Jephtah and asked him to become the leader. Jephtah said to them: "Ye did hate me and drive me from my father's house, and now, when you are in distress, ye come to me for help. If ye bring me home again to fight against the Ammonites and I am successful, shall I remain your head the rest of my life?" The elders promised him that he should remain as their head and Jephtah went with them.

His Negotiations With the Enemy

He gathered an army together, but before making war he sent messengers to the King of Ammon, asking why the Ammonites were making war against Israel. The Ammonites' king answered because the Children of Israel had taken away their land. Jephtah replied, showing that it was not Israel, but the Moabites who had taken away the land of Ammon, and that Israel had taken it from the Moabites. But the Ammonites were not satisfied and continued to make war.

The Fatal Vow

Thereupon Jephtah made ready for battle. Before going into battle he made a vow unto the Lord that if the Lord would grant him victory and let him come safely home again, the first thing that would come to meet him out of the doors of his house he would offer as a sacrifice unto the Lord. It was a rash and thoughtless vow to make, and Jephtah paid very dearly for it.

He was successful in battle, completely defeating the Ammonites. When Jephtah returned and came unto his house, his daughter, his only child, who had heard of the victory of her father, came out to meet

him with song and with dance. When Jephtah saw her he was overcome with grief. He said: "Alas, my daughter, thou bringest great sorrow upon me. I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and cannot go back."

The Courage of Sheilah

Thereupon he told her of the vow he had made and that she was the one who must suffer the consequences. She was very brave and accepted the circumstance with beautiful heroism. "If thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do unto me in accordance with the word, since the Lord hath granted thee thy petition. Only this one thing let be done for me. Let me have a respite of two months that with my companions I may bewail my fate." This was granted and after two months, when she came back, Jephtah fulfilled his vow.

The Quarrel of Ephraim

Now the men of Ephraim came to Jephtah and they quarreled with him, as they had done with Gideon. They said unto him: "Why didst thou not call us to go out and fight with thee? We will go and burn thy house down." Jephtah did not answer them softly like Gideon did. He said to them: "I called you, but you did not come. Now, then, why do you quarrel with me this day?" He gathered his men together again and made war upon the tribe of Ephraim and killed many thousands of them. Then he returned unto his house and he ruled over Israel for six years and died.

Lesson Presentation

On the 18th June, 1815, the Prussian General Blucher was hastening to the help of Wellington at Waterloo. The roads were very bad. He encouraged his troops with words and gestures, "Forward, my

Point of Contact

soldiers, forward!" "It is impossible; it cannot be done," answered the soldiers. Again and again he

urged them. "It must be done. I have *promised* Wellington to be there. Promised, do you hear? You wouldn't have me break my word?" And it was done. Because Blucher kept his promise and came to the timely aid of Wellington, the allied armies were victorious, and the power of Napoleon was broken at Waterloo. And this was because Blucher appealed to his soldiers for the honor of his promise.

The Sanctity of a Promise

A promise once given is a sacred duty which no considerations of loss or of pain should keep us from fulfilling. No doubt Jephtah felt this way, for he fulfilled his promise, in his vow unto the Lord, even though it cost him the life of his only child. The trouble with Jephtah was, however, that he made a rash promise, and what came of it shows us very plainly that we should be very careful in making a promise. Very truly does the sacred writer speak to us in our memory verse. (Recall the verse.)

Beware of Rashness in Promising

Many boys and girls are apt to make promises on the spur of the moment, in order to get something that they might want, without thinking what the result may be. The lesson of this story of Jephtah is two-fold: first, that we should be very careful in making a promise; second, that, having made it, we must consider that our honor is bound up in the keeping of it. There is an inscription upon the tomb of Baron Stein, which reads as follows:

"His nay was nay without recall;
His yea was yea, and powerful all;
He gave his yea with *careful heed,*
His thoughts and words were well agreed;
His word, his bond and seal."

This is as fine a tribute as can be paid to any man.

The Honor System

The University of Virginia has what is known as the honor system among the students. At the examinations the students simply give their pledge that they will not give or receive any help on the examination. During the examination the professors go away, leaving the students entirely to themselves without anybody watching them. They may even have their books with them. There is very little cheating at the University of Virginia.

When to Count and When Not to Count the Cost

It may be said, that you should never count the cost in keeping a promise, but it must also be remembered that you should *count the cost before* making the promise. We have another beautiful instance in the Bible of one being ready to keep his promise at all costs, when Judah, having promised his father to care for Benjamin on the journey into Egypt, was ready to give up his own liberty in order that Benjamin might go back safely to his father.

Our Promise as a People

It must be remembered that we, as Jews, have promised to be the bearers of God's word to the families of men. The thought of this promise should be ever present with us to make us realize that it is a part of a sacred and honorable duty for us to be true to this pledge in the observance of our religious duties in our daily life.

Ignorance of the Law Brought Sorrow

Jewish tradition teaches us that the two months' respite which was granted to the daughter of Jephtah was for the purpose of finding out if there was not some way by which Jephtah might be released from his vow. The Jewish law does not countenance human sacrifice, and it is provided that when a human life is in danger, it may be redeemed by the payment of something else in its place, as was the case with Isaac. But,

tradition tells us, the people were ignorant of the law, and it was this ignorance of the law of God that had made them commit sin and do evil in the sight of the Lord. There was one man, however, who did know, and that was Phinehas, the High Priest. If he had been questioned about the case, he would have been able to give a decision. But Jephtah was too proud to go to him. He said: "Should I, the chief of the tribes of Israel, humiliate myself to go to one of the rank and file?" And on the other hand Phinehas said: "Should I, the High Priest, and the son of a high priest, humiliate myself to go to an ignorant man?" Because of the pride and vanity of these two men the law was not made known, and the daughter of Jephtah lost her life. The tradition goes on to say that both of these men were very sadly punished because of their foolish and stubborn pride.

Foolish Pride and Real Honor

It also happens that people cause and continue unhappiness to themselves and others because a foolish pride prevents them from clearing up a misunderstanding. The real honor is with the person who is willing to do what he can for the sake of friendliness and amity, and not with the one who stands upon his stubborn pride.

The story of Jephtah is an unhappy one, and it is so because the people in his day neglected the worship of God and failed to keep the promises given to Him.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson the teacher should bring up other instances as to the value of carefulness in making a promise and the duty of keeping it when once made. It would be well to adapt the sentiment to the home life, that children who give a promise to their parents or to their teachers to behave during their

absence should let no temptation induce them to break their promise. In recalling the memory verse, the emphasis should be laid upon the fact that, because of its sanctity when once given a promise should not be lightly given.

Relieving the Tension

Make use of the blackboard wherever possible for names and verses (in this instance, also the epitaph quoted), likewise of the map for the location of places.

Home Work

Tell the children to bring in an incident, either of their own experience, or observation or reading, wherein a promise was kept at a great sacrifice. Tissot Bible Picture No. 68.

QUESTIONS

1. What two things may be included in the name Gilead?

2. How did Jephtah's life and conduct reflect conditions in Israel?

3. How does tradition give further evidence as to this?

4. How does Jephtah fail in comparison with Gideon?

5. What was the redeeming feature in Jephtah's contest with the Ammonites?

6. What explanations can be given of Jephtah's vow and its results?

7. In what light does Jephtah's daughter appear in the episode?

8. How does this episode further reflect the conditions in Israel?

9. Which would you commend, Jephtah's or Gideon's treatment of the Ephraimites, and why?

10. Deduce a moral, not herein given, from this lesson.

Lesson V

Samson

Lesson V. SAMSON

Required Readings—Judges XIII, XIV, XV and XVI.

Memory Verse—"Not by might nor by strength, but by thy spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zechariah IV: 6.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that great strength, whether of mind or body, unwisely and ignobly used, is self-destructive. Every gift of our person should be considered as a means, not so much of self-aggrandizement, or for the accomplishment of selfish purposes, but as a trust meant for the general good and unselfish aims. The greater the gift, the greater the responsibility. No human life, however strong, no human institution, however powerful, can serve a noble purpose or endure without being vivified by the spirit of God, in the sense of service to Him and to mankind.

Teachers' Preparation

The career of Samson begins a new period in the history of the Judges. The time of the Judges falls naturally into two divisions, the first one of which ends with Jephtah. The second begins with Samson and culminates with the organization of the kingdom. It was objective rather than subjective circumstance that brought it about. Israel here faces a new enemy, one who has to do with more than one tribe, and one that is not subdued in one contest. It was the continuous and powerful opposition of the Philistines that compelled the coalescence of the several tribes into permanent union under monarchial form.

The Philistines

The Philistines, with whom we have to deal in this lesson, differ from the other Canaanitish nations in the fact that they were not native to the soil of Palestine, and were not even remotely kin to the Israelites. The Philistines were the descendants of a north African tribe and related to the Egyptians. Caphtor is thrice mentioned in the Bible as the primitive seat of the Philistines. (Deut. II: 23; Jer. XLVII: 4 and Amos IX: 7.) The passage in Jeremiah speaks of Caphtor as an island, but the probability is that Caphtor was a strip of land on the northeastern coast of Africa, if not in Egypt, at least near to it. Thence the Philistines migrated to the western coast of Palestine, of which they took possession. They gradually took on the religious culture of their Canaanitish neighbors, but remained a brave and warlike people, and were said to be of gigantic stature. Their long continued and fierce antagonism to the Israelites was really the best possible disclipine for Israel itself, compelling the tribes to remain together. The Philistines were not really conquered until David's time, and they reappeared even after Solomon's death. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. X, pp. 1 and 2.)

The Peculiar Charm of the Samson Tales

The story of Samson is of peculiar interest. It has the fascination which all deeds of physical prowess have. Its appeal, even in this twentieth century, is to that elemental nature within us which admires and applauds bodily endurance and skill. It is the same appeal that the stories of Ulysses and Hercules have. One writer (Paul Carus, "The Story of Samson," The Open Court Pub. Co., Chicago, 1907) goes so far as to say that the whole story of Samson is only a piece of primitive folk-lore, symbolic of the yearly passage of the sun. He derives the name "Samson" from the

Hebrew name, "Shemesh," meaning "the sun," and places the story in one category with the wanderings of Ulysses and the labors of Hercules.

Their Place in the Canon

As Mr. Montefiore well says ("Bible for Home Reading," part I, p. 172), the Samson tales were made a part of a religious book by reason of the intense religious spirit of the Jews. Their presence in the Bible is a tribute to the dominant religious sentiment that has always obtained among Jews.

The Nazarite

The history of Samson likewise brings to our notice the Nazarite vow. Though the subject is first mentioned in Numbers VI, and the restrictions there given, Samson is the first and doubtless the best known instance of the institution. A Nazarite means one who lives apart, one who has made a vow of abstinence. The three main marks of the Nazarite were his abstinence from strong drink, his unshorn locks and his non-defilement by his touch of a dead body, even that of his father and mother. (For further information see Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, pp. 195-6.)

Character of Samson

The birth of Samson, like that of Isaac and Samuel, was divinely announced to his parents. Samson himself, while called a Judge, was not such in reality. At no time did he rule over the people. He was simply a great, hulking, good-natured giant, whose attacks on the Philistines were prompted more by reason of personal resentment than by any idea of freeing his people. Still, his damage to the Philistines was so great that his life materially helped his people. He was by far stronger physically than he was mentally or spiritually. Had his tremendous prowess been guided by mental acumen and fine purpose, his name

would have stood much higher on the pages of history. He was easily led astray by his physical appetites and they led to his undoing. In the last act of his life there is a gleam of the light of a finer purpose; and in more sense than one did Samson do more hurt to the Philistines in his death than during his life.

Lesson Material

After the death of Jephtah there were three other Judges who ruled for short periods over the people of Israel. But the people continued to do evil in the sight of the Lord and a new enemy rose up against them. Their new enemy was the Philistine nation, that occupied the country in the western part of Palestine, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Their chief cities were Gazzah, Ashdod and Ashkelon. (Point out the cities and country of the Philistines on the map.) They troubled the people of Israel very greatly so that they were in deep misery and want.

The Birth of Samson

At this time there lived in the tribe of Dan a man by the name of Manoah, whose wife's name was Zorah. They had no children. But one day an angel appeared to Zorah and told her that a son would be born to her and that he was to be consecrated to the Lord as a Nazarite. A child was born and was named Samson. As a sign of his consecration unto the Lord, the hair on his head never felt the touch of the shears and his locks remained unshorn.

The Wedding Feast and the Riddle

When Samson grew to be a young man he fell in love with a Philistine girl, the daughter of a man of Timnath. One day while going to visit her a lion sprang out before him in the pathway. Samson had no weapon with him, but as God had gifted him with great strength, he seized the lion by the jaws with

his bare hands and tore it apart. Some time later when passing by the same spot, he found the dead body of the lion and saw that some bees had made a home in it and placed honey there. When Samson was married a wedding feast was spread, and it lasted for seven days as was the custom. There were thirty young men attending the feast. On the first day Samson gave them a riddle and said that if they could guess it he would give each one of them a linen tunic and an outer garment. If they could not guess it within the seven days of the feast, they would each of them have to pay him the same. The riddle was: "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

They could not answer the riddle in three days, and they told Samson's wife to get the answer from him. She teased him till he told her about the lion, and she told the answer to her people. Samson was very angry that they had done this. He went to the Philistine city of Ashkelon, where he met thirty men, took their garments from them, and paid his debt to the wedding guests.

The Foxes

When Samson came back later to get his wife, her father told him that he could not have her, as he had given her to another man. Thereupon, because he had been so basely treated, Samson went out and caught three hundred foxes. He tied them together, two and two, by their tails, fastened burning torches to them and sent them through the fields of the Philistines so that the standing harvest was destroyed.

The Jawbone of an Ass

The Philistines thereupon came to the men of Judah, where Samson had found a home, and told them that they must give him up. The men of Judah were

very much afraid of the Philistines and they came to Samson and said: "We must give you up to the Philistines or they will utterly destroy us." Samson told them that if they themselves would promise not to attack him, he would let them bind him and give him up to the Philistines. They promised, and he allowed himself to be bound with seven cords and to be delivered up to the Philistines. When the Philistines set upon him he burst the cords as if they were threads, and, having no weapon with him, he picked up the jaw-bone of an ass that was lying in the roadway, and, in defending himself, slew many thousands of the Philistines.

The Gates of Gazzah

Later Samson went one night to stay in the city of Gazzah. The Philistines locked him in, thinking to attack him at daylight. But during the night Samson arose, and, picking up the gates of the city, together with the gate posts he carried them away on his shoulders.

Delilah

Sometime later, notwithstanding his first experience, Samson fell in love with another Philistine woman, by the name of Delilah. When he had married her the lords of the Philistines came out and said to her that she must get from him the secret of his strength and they would pay her handsomely. So Delilah said to Samson: "I pray thee tell me wherein thy great strength lieth." Samson said to her: "If they bind me with seven moist cords that have not been dried then I shall be like any other man."

Fatal Weakness

When Samson had fallen asleep, Delilah bound him with seven moist cords as he had said. She called in men of the Philistines into the next chamber. Then

she came in and awoke Samson, saying: "The Philistines are upon thee." And when Samson awoke, he tore the cords from him as a thread of tow is snapped by fire and drove the attacking Philistines from him. A second and third time Delilah asked him for the secret of his strength, and Samson put her off as before. Finally, tired of her coaxing, he told her the secret of his strength, saying that no shears had ever touched his head, and that if his locks were shorn he would become weak like any other man.

The Betrayal

Again Delilah waited until Samson was asleep, then took a pair of shears and cut his hair from his head. Again she called men from the Philistines to lie in wait for him and went in to arouse him, crying: "Samson, the Philistines are upon thee." Samson awoke and tried to defend himself as before, but, alas, his strength was gone. The Philistines captured him, took him to Gazzah, put out his eyes and made him a prisoner working in the salt mill.

The End

Time went by and as his hair grew longer Samson's strength began to come back. The Philistines treated him very cruelly, made sport of him in every way and compelled him to do feats of strength for their amusement. One day they had a great feast in honor of their god in the largest temple they had. All the lords and ladies of the Philistines gathered to celebrate the feast. Samson was brought forth to make sport for them and to show his great strength. After Samson had performed for them for a while he wanted to rest. He asked his guide to lead him to the great pillars that supported the balcony and the roof of the temple, where the great crowds had gathered to look down upon him. When Samson was between these two

massive supporting pillars, he reached out and placed an arm about each one of them. He prayed to God to grant him but for one moment his great strength back again. Then he tugged and pulled with all the power that was in him, until he pulled the pillars from their bases, bringing down the balcony and roof of the temple, crushing all those who were within the temple and among them Samson himself. Thus, with his last strength, did Samson fight against the enemies of Israel, and it is said that he did more hurt to the Philistines by his death than he had done during his life.

Lesson Presentation

There is a story told of a fine big steamer that went upon the rocks and was wrecked. There was a clear sky and no storm prevailing at the time. The wonder was how the captain, who was an experienced officer, could be careless enough to let his boat get so far off her course. The captain himself was as much surprised as anybody. The compass-box was not broken and the needle seemed to be all right. Upon examining the compass-box, however, he discovered a little black bit of something that looked like the point of a knife blade. The captain remembered that one

Point of Contact

of the sailors had cleaned the box the day before and, calling him, asked him about it. The sailor remembered cleaning it and said that while doing so he discovered a bit of rust, or something of the sort, which he tried to rub off. As rubbing did not succeed, he took his knife and scraped it clean, breaking off a bit of the point of the blade. That bit of steel blade had done the mischief. It had been left in the box. It was large enough to affect the needle of the compass and turn it far enough from its true direction to mislead the man at the wheel, and was the cause

of the wrecking of the boat with great loss of life and property.

The Guidance of Power

This story illustrates the fact that great strength or tremendous power avail nothing if they are not led in the right direction. Even further, if they are used in the wrong direction they bring loss and destruction. This was the trouble with Samson. God had gifted him with tremendous strength. While it is true that he used his strength against the enemies of Israel, he did not do so with a fine purpose. Had Samson been as strong in mind and heart as he was in body his life would have made a different story. As strong as he was in body, yet he was easily led astray by his appetites and passions. He should have remembered that his life was dedicated to the service of God, and that to serve Him he should have remained with his own people, instead of going abroad to secure a wife who was brought up among idols.

In the Name of God

We do feel a great deal of sympathy, however, for Samson, because we know that he was not mean in spirit, only ignorant. He did not realize the responsibility of his gift. He used his strength for personal ends. He did not seem to know, until the end of his life, that it was in the name of God and for the honor of God that he should have used his power. There is a Hebrew phrase much used by our fathers that is filled with fine meaning. It is simply the two words: "L'shem Shomayim," "In the name of Heaven." When a person does a fine, noble thing, it is done "L'shem Shomayim." This phrase and thought should be a guiding principle in our lives. There are many people like Samson, who do not realize that the gifts that they may have should be used rather with fine purpose than

for selfish aims. Each one of us has a gift in one direction or another. Each one of us should use our gift to make others happy, to bring blessing and pleasure into the life of others. We should be guided by the thought of serving others, and if so, we will find that our life will be itself more blessed with true happiness than could possibly be obtained by selfish efforts. Selfishness is like the little piece of the steel blade in the compass-box. It deflects the needle of high aim and noble purpose, and very often, in spite of great power and splendid strength, the ship of life is led all unknowingly upon the rocks of destruction.

Real Strength

Rabbi Ben Zoma taught (Sayings of the Fathers, IV: 2): "Who is strong? He that controls his inclinations." This is the greatest strength, the power of self-control. It comes to us through obedience and discipline. That obedience and discipline which as children we should yield unto our parents and which all our life long we should give unto our God. This is what is meant by the memory verse (recall it) that that which we accomplish is not so much by mere strength or power, but by our strength and power guided by the spirit of God within us.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson instances in history of strong men misled may be added. The object of this lesson is to impress the sentiment of the memory verse, that all power, or strength, or ability of any kind, that is not rightly guided, not only fail of their best purpose, but likewise are self-destructive. The right guidance comes only from Divine source.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write names and verses on the blackboard. Also use the map freely to locate the territory and the cities of the Philistines.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures, No. 585 and 631. It would also be well to ask one of the children to bring a copy of Milton's "Samson Agonistes" to be read at the next lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. What cause makes a natural division of the Judges into two parts?

2. Describe the origin and character of the Philistines.

3. Of what real benefit were they to the Israelites?

4. What is the peculiar charm of the Samson stories?

5. Why were they made a part of the Bible?

6. What is the meaning of Nazarite?

7. Discuss the character of Samson.

8. Discuss Samson's marrying among the enemy.

9. Discuss the action of the men of Judah in giving Samson up to the enemy.

10. Suggest a different treatment of the material for this lesson.

Lesson VI

Ruth

Lesson VI

Ruth

cause of the troubled conditions brought about by the continuous attacks of the Philistines. The marriage of his two sons to Moabitish women was not an unusual event in those days. The Moabites were not among the seven nations forbidden in marriage. (Deut. VII: 1-3.)

Two Ancient Customs Revealed

The return of Naomi and Ruth to Judah brings to light two practices among ancient Israel and ordained in the Bible. The first is the gleaning privilege. Ruth went to glean in the fields of Boaz. Gleaning was not merely the privilege, but also the right of the poor. It was commanded (Leviticus XIX: 9-10, and Deuteronomy XXIV: 20-21) as a duty. Whoever neglected to leave the gleanings for the poor, or made it difficult for them to glean, was considered a robber of the poor. The Talmudic interpretation of the passage includes the poor of all nations as well as of the Jews. (It would be well at this point to acquaint the children at some length with the custom of gleaning.) (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V, pp. 677-678.)

The other custom disclosed in this story is that of the redemption of lands which had gone out of the possession of the original owners. The duty which fell upon Boaz, as kinsman, to redeem the lands that should have belonged to Chilion, the husband of Ruth, had he not died, was that which was commanded in Leviticus XXV: 25. This was not the law of the Levirate, but rather that of "Goel," the redeemer. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, p. 18.)

Broad-mindedness

Another refreshing thought that comes to us out of this Book of Ruth is the display of toleration and broadmindedness. Ruth, a foreigner and a Moabitess, becomes the ancestress of King David. As Mr. Montefiore (Bible for Home Reading, Part I, p. 184) says,

"that in all probability the moral which the tender and gentle story intended to teach was this: that the Jews should be more anxious to spread their own higher knowledge of God and of goodness among the nations round about, than to shut themselves up within a ring of isolation." The Book teaches that "fidelity is wider than race, and that Ruth, the foreigner, can be as good a Jewess as the bluest-blooded in the land."

(For literary comment on the Book of Ruth, see "Literary Study of the Bible," by Moulton, Boston, 1895, pp. 235-238. For an explanation of the customs see "Bible for Home Reading," by Montefiore, Part I, pp. 183-184.)

The Praise Due to Naomi

The character of Naomi also should come in for a great deal of praise. There is no doubt that the self-sacrifice of Ruth was, in a great measure, a reflection of the self-sacrifice of Naomi, who did not wish her poverty and isolation to be a bar to the future happiness of the young woman. Association with Naomi had a great deal to do with the influence upon Ruth, and the figure of Naomi is no less beautiful and praiseworthy than that of Ruth. This thought of the contagion of goodness can be amplified.

Lesson Material

Dear children, the lesson that we have today is a sweet and beautiful story of loving fidelity and noble self-forgetfulness. There lived in the land of Judah a man named Elimelech. His family consisted of his wife, Naomi, and two sons. On account of the famine in the land of Judah, Elimelech went over to the land of Moab. Here he settled and founded a home, and his two sons married. But trouble and sickness came to them. First Elimelech, and then his two sons, died,

leaving Naomi and the two daughters-in-law, whose names were Orpah and Ruth.

The Return to Judah

Naomi decided to go back to her home in Judah, where her friends and family were. She told her daughters-in-law to return to their fathers' homes, where they would be cared for, and no doubt have a chance to be married again. The daughters-in-law wished to go with her, but Naomi said: "No, my daughters, turn again, go your way; it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone forth against me." So Orpah kissed her mother-in-law.

The Fidelity of Ruth

But Ruth clave unto Naomi. And Naomi said: "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back, return thou after her." But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave thee and return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, where thou livest, I will live, thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee."

The Field of Boaz

So Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem, in Judah. In order to support them, Ruth went to glean in the fields, to pick up the grain which the harvesters had left in the first reaping of the fields. This gleaning was ordained by Jewish law to belong to the poor, and the owners of fields were commanded to leave them and not to gather them up. (Read Leviticus XIX: 9-10.) It happened that Ruth went into the field belonging to Boaz. When Boaz came to his field in the morning he saw Ruth, and seeing that she was a stranger, he asked his helpers who the young woman

was. They told him that she was a Moabite girl, the daughter-in-law of Naomi, who had come back with her. Boaz was a good-hearted man, and he spoke kindly to the maiden, told her that she need not go into any other field, but should stay in his field with the maidens. He also told her that at noon time she could eat of the food provided for the reapers and could drink from the water drawn for them. When Ruth thanked him for his kindness to a stranger, Boaz told her that he had heard of what she had done; that she had left her home and her friends to come back with Naomi.

The Redemption of the Land

When Ruth went home in the evening, she told Naomi of what had taken place. Naomi remembered that Boaz was a kinsman of hers, and it was a custom in Israel in those days that the kinsman of a widow should redeem the lands which she had been compelled to sell. So Naomi sent word to Boaz that the land which belonged to her husband, Elimelech, and which would have been inherited by his son, the husband of Ruth, who had died, should be redeemed by him. Boaz readily consented, but said that there was another kinsman who was nearer than he, and that if this kinsman did not take up this duty, he would be very happy to do so.

The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth

The next day, in the gate of the city, in the presence of ten men, Boaz asked this other kinsman if he was willing to redeem the lands. The man said that he was satisfied to allow Boaz to do it, and he formally released his right, which Boaz took up. Boaz was so impressed by the modesty and sweetness of Ruth, and by her loving constancy and unselfishness, that he asked her to marry him. This she did, and so became the ancestress of King David.

Lesson Presentation

On the 15th of April, 1912, the steamship Titanic struck an iceberg in mid-ocean. Though the Titanic was considered an unsinkable ship, yet she began to fill rapidly, and it was evident that she could not remain long above water. There were, perhaps, 3000 people on board, passengers and crew, and there were not enough lifeboats for all. The command was given, "Women and children first." So the men stood aside while the women and the little ones went first into the boats. Among the passengers were Mr. and Mrs. Isador Straus, of New York City. When the time came for Mrs. Straus to step into the boat and leave her husband to go down with the ship, she said: "No; I will not leave him. We have been together in life, and now, if it be God's will, we will be together in death."

Point of Contact

The Influence of a Noble Deed

When the survivors came to shore, and this incident of Mr. and Mrs. Straus became known, the world was full of praise for her heroic and self-sacrificing action. She was called a modern Ruth.

So we see how the light of a beautiful deed shines through the ages. The loving faithfulness of Ruth, her utter forgetfulness of self, her clinging to Naomi when all things were dark and sad and she might have bettered herself by going back to her father's house—all these things have been an inspiration to all who have ever heard thereof.

Now, it is true that we are not all called upon to act under the circumstances in which Ruth was called upon, but it is also true that we are often called upon to make a choice between doing something for ourselves and doing something for others. The lesson we learn from the story of Ruth is, that we should consider the happiness of others before our own, and we

will find very often that in this very giving up of our happiness we find our greatest happiness.

The Contagion of Goodness

We will find that when we begin to act for others, others will begin to act for us. It was because Naomi herself wished to help her daughters-in-law that she told them to leave her. She thought that they would be better off, each in her father's house. Naomi's self-denial brought out Ruth's self-denial. The poet Lowell says very beautifully: "As one lamp lights another, nor groweth less, so nobleness enkindleth nobleness."

The Beauty of Holiness

Another thing: whenever we think of Ruth we always think of her as a fair and lovely woman. This is because we feel that the loveliness of her character gave her loveliness of feature. There is a little verse that gives us this thought:

"Oh, wondrous spell of love and loyalty!
No record ever said that Ruth was fair;
And yet all thoughts have pictured her in mien
So beauteous, art itself might well despair,
Seeking to paint her tender constancy!"

You will remember that we learned last year that the face of Moses shone with such a light that the people could scarce look upon it. This, too, was the light which is seen shining from the face of Ruth.

One thought more: while such acts of self-surrender give happiness to those immediately concerned, they also add to the beauty and dignity of human life, and especially add to the honor of Israel. The act of Mrs. Straus gave greater glory to the name of Israel than have all the achievements of its millionaires.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson, the main thought to be dwelt upon is that of self-surrender, which is exemplified in the conduct of Naomi as well as of Ruth. The whole story is a very pretty picture of conditions and customs in ancient Israel, which, too, can be graphically brought out in the review of the lesson.

Relieving the Tension

Point out on the map the city of Bethlehem, in Judah, and trace the course that Elimelech took to go over into Moab. Show the pictures of the gleaning in the fields, and recall the answer of Gideon in Lesson III to the contention of Ephraim. Write names and verses on the blackboard.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures, Nos. 413, 414 and 416. Ask the children to bring in for the next lesson an incident of self-surrender, either from their own experience or from reading.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it that, in spite of its contrast, the story of Ruth gives a vivid picture of the conditions during the period of Judges?

2. Discuss the moral beauty of the command to leave the gleanings.

3. What significance is there in the marriage of the sons of Elimelech to Moabitish women?

4. What was the purpose of Naomi in bidding her daughters-in-law to return to their home, and what Jewish sentiment does it reveal?

5. Discuss the character of Naomi and its bearing upon the conduct of Ruth.

6. What two parts of this story emphasize the teaching of toleration and its existence in Jewish thought?

7. What subsequent event gives Ruth so prominent a place in history?

8. Discuss the character of Ruth.

Lesson VII

Hannah and Samuel

Lesson VII. HANNAH AND SAMUEL

Required Readings—I Samuel I-VII, inclusive.

Memory Verse—"Righteousness exalteth a nation; sin is a reproach to a people." (Proverbs XIV: 34.)

Aim of the Lesson

The primary thought of this lesson is that the strength of a people, as of an individual, lies in the purity of its life. A nation may be ever so strong politically and materially, but if its life is unclean and its citizens are corrupt, the nation cannot endure. It is the history of all great empires that their downfall was brought about more by inward corruption than by external force.

Obversely, when a people, steeped in sin and therefore a prey to its enemies, raises itself from its sinful life and debased conduct, it acquires the strength that permits it successfully to resist the enemy that had hitherto encroached upon it. Thus Israel grew stronger during the leadership of Samuel because he awakened in it a new sense of righteousness and moral responsibility, and weaned it from the corrupt practices which had obtained. It may be added that what is thus true of a nation is likewise true of an individual. He who is clean of hands and pure of heart is strong to defend himself from enemies without and within.

Teachers' Preparation

With Samuel we come to one of the very great figures in ancient Israel. His work in bridging over the chasm from the loose and lawless conditions of the Judges to the compact organization of the kingdom, is next to that of Moses in importance and value.

Indeed, he is so recognized by the Bible writers themselves. (See Jeremiah XV: 1 and Psalms XCIX: 6.) His greatness consists in that he found the people in the depths of political and religious degradation and left them on the threshold of one of the finest epochs of their history.

The greatness of this achievement is further emphasized in that he brought it about by means of that force, peculiar to Israel, which is religious rather than material—the appeal to conscience rather than the appeal to arms. He weaned the people from the corrupt practices into which they had fallen. He restored the worship of God as a unifying force and made the sanctuary the focal point of their life. The national revival at Mizpah (VII: 3-10) was essentially religious, and it became the vivifying force of a national, political regeneration.

His spiritual power is likewise evidenced in that with him arose the spirit of true prophecy. The schools of the prophets, from which later came such magnificent figures, began with Samuel. He himself soared to prophetic heights and his later utterances (XV: 22) showed that he could rise above the accessories of service to touch the true spirit of genuine worship. The figure of Eli, is, as it were, only a background to the picture of Samuel. We learn of him only in connection with Samuel. He seems to have been himself a man of blameless life, yet of very little force or influence. He did not control either the people or his own household.

The political conditions of Samuel's lifetime disclosed the fact that the time was ripe for a great change. The lesser enemies, the native Canaanitish

nations and the Arab tribes which had worried the tribes of Israel separately, had been sufficiently subdued to be no longer considered. There remained now the powerful people of the Philistines, whose attacks were felt by all the people together. This fact paved the way for the consummation of the monarchy.

But it was from the religious side that the real force for unity came. While the Ark was at Shiloh, it had been a rallying center for the people, but the service of God had been corrupted by the introduction of many heathen rites. The death of the sons of Eli was an object lesson for the people. Samuel's insistence upon purer life began to have its effect. After the loss of the Ark, Mizpah became the religious center where Samuel continued his ministrations and teaching. Furthermore, he went among the several tribes to judge them, but in reality teaching and preaching the doctrine of Israel, unity in a pure worship of God.

The prayer of Hannah (Chapter II: 1-11) is considered one of the beautiful passages of the Bible, rich in spiritual power and beauty. Hannah's dedication of Samuel to the Lord as a Nazarite followed along the lines of a similar dedication by the mother of Samson.

Lesson Material

In coming back to the story of the people of Israel, we find that Eli was at their head as judge and as priest. We do not know much of the early days of Eli. When the Bible mentions him he is already an old man. He seems to have been a good man, but his influence was not strong even with his own household. His two boys, Hophni and Phineas,

Eli and His Sons

though they were priests in Israel, were very wicked and brought great trouble.

The Prayer of Hannah

At this time there lived a man named Elkanah, whose wife's name was Hannah. Hannah had no children and she felt very sad about it. Elkanah and Hannah used to go each year to Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, to observe the festivals and to worship in the tabernacle. One year when she was there Hannah went into the tabernacle, prayed very earnestly that God might give her a child, and said that if her gift were a little boy, she would dedicate him unto the service of God. She was very much dominated by emotion. As she prayed her lips moved and her body swayed, though she made no sound.

The Mistake of Eli

Eli, who was standing by, thought that she was drunken and reproved her, but Hannah answered: "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, but neither wine nor strong drink have I drunk. I have poured out my soul before the Lord." Eli saw that he had judged her wrongly, and he answered and said: "Go in peace and may the God of Israel grant the petition which thou hast asked of Him."

Judge Not Hastily

People often misjudge one another when they do not know what the real conditions are. We should be careful not to judge our neighbor too hastily. And when we do make a mistake, we should be ready to acknowledge it, as Eli was.

The Birth of Samuel

Hannah returned to her home, and to her great happiness some time afterwards a little boy baby was born to her. When the boy was grown so that he could leave his mother, she brought him to the sanctuary at Shiloh and gave him over to Eli to be trained

for the service of the Lord. (Show Wilde's Bible Picture No. 471.) She called his name Samuel, because, she said, "God has hearkened to my prayer."

The Call of Samuel

Samuel stayed with Eli, and was a fine little fellow, of sweet disposition and of earnest faith. One night when he was sleeping in his little room in the sanctuary, he heard a voice calling, "Samuel." He thought Eli had called him, and went to him and said, "Here am I." Eli said, "I have not called you. Go and lie down again." A second and third time a voice called, and Samuel went to Eli each time. The third time Eli, seeing that it was the voice of God calling Samuel, told him that if the voice called again he should answer and say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Then the word of God came to Samuel, telling him how the sons of Eli were to be punished for their wickedness, and that great trouble would come to the house of Israel.

The Voice of God

God speaks to all people, the young as well as the old, but those who hear Him are those whose hearts are ready for Him. It is possible for each one of us to feel the spirit of God within us, to hear His voice, as it were, and it is with us ourselves to be able to hear and to be ready to answer.

Samuel grew up to be a strong, wise and God-fearing man, and all Israel recognized that Samuel was a leader and a prophet among them.

The Loss of the Ark

One day the Philistines again attacked the people of Israel. Eli was yet alive. The people sent to Shiloh, asking that the Ark of the Covenant should be given to them, that it might be carried before them on the battlefield. Eli permitted it to be taken. But when the

battle was fought the Philistines were the conquerors and captured the Ark of the Covenant. The two sons of Eli were also slain in battle. A messenger came from the battlefield to Eli, telling him the dreadful news of the capture of the Ark of the Covenant and of the death of his sons. Eli was so shocked that he fell from his chair and died. Then Samuel was recognized as the leader among the people.

Death of Eli

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

In one of the great art galleries of London there is a beautiful picture by a celebrated artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is a picture of a little boy kneeling in prayer, with his hands clasped before him, and looking upward with a look of such serene faith and trustfulness, that the beauty of it inspires the beholder. The picture is called "The Child Samuel." (Here show the picture, Wilde's Bible Picture No. 417.)

The Boy Is Father to the Man

We can readily understand how a boy who was thus God-fearing and trustful could grow up to be a fine strong man and to do great service for his people and his God as we will learn Samuel did.

Whence Came His Faith

Yet we must remember that Samuel got this from his mother. Each year after he had been given over to Eli his mother came to visit him and brought him a little coat which she had made for him. The loving faith that his mother showed to him, Samuel also possessed. It made him strong enough to be righteous in a generation that was very wicked. (What other man was righteous in a wicked generation?) Samuel followed the saying of the wise teacher Hillel, "In a place where there is no man, strive thou to be a man." (Sayings of the Fathers, 11:6.)

The Courage to Stand Alone

Here is something in which we can all be like Samuel. There are times when a boy or a girl can show the spirit which is in them by being brave enough and strong enough to stand out against their playmates when they want to do something mean or cruel. Sometimes boys in a crowd will want to do something that is not good, as for instance to play hookey from school, or play a trick on the blind man at the corner, or go and steal some apples out of an orchard. There are many boys who would not do such things by themselves, but when a crowd does it, they are afraid to offend their playmates, afraid of being laughed at or being called names, if they refused to go along. But the boy who has true courage will not go. He will say, "That's not a nice thing to do. It's not brave or manly." You will find that in the end any boy who has courage to stand for what is right even in the face of teasing or jeers, the boy who is brave enough to stand alone, that boy is going to win the respect of his playmates. When he grows to be a man he will be one of the kind that will do the right, even if he has to stand alone to do it. That's the kind of men and women, too, that we ought to be, especially we Jews, who are less in numbers than our fellow citizens; should always be brave enough and strong enough to stand up for the faith that is ours, even in the face of all kinds of antagonism. Like Samuel, we should have serene trust, and then in places where there are no men we will be strong enough to act the manly part.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson the contrast is to be made between the weakness of Eli and the strength of Samuel. This will prepare the way for the following lesson that tells of Samuel's work in

regenerating the spirit of the people of Israel. Recall both the memory verses and the quotation from the "Sayings of the Fathers."

Relieving the Tension Point out on the map the location of Shiloh. Write all names and verses on the blackboard. Describe the Ark of the Covenant.

Home Work Wilde's Bible Pictures Nos. 417 and 471. Ask the children to relate an instance of one person having the courage to change the evil intentions of a crowd.

QUESTIONS

1. What kind of a place does Samuel occupy in history?

2. How is he regarded by Bible writers?

3. In what did the greatness of his work consist?

4. Through what power did he accomplish it?

5. How, otherwise, was his spiritual power evidenced?

6. In what do we recognize Samuel as a great prophet?

7. Discuss the character of Eli and show how it affected the condition of the people.

8. In what did Eli's sons commit the deepest sin?

9. How would you account for Eli's mistake of Hannah's emotion?

10. How would you explain the "Call of Samuel" to a child that questioned its literalness?

Lesson VIII

Saul Anointed

Lesson VIII. SAUL ANOINTED

Required Readings—I Samuel VII-XV, inclusive.

Memory Verse—"Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken better than the fat of rams." (I Samuel XV: 22.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach the responsibility of power. Every office, whether civil, social, industrial or religious, entails obligations which have to be satisfied even at the expense of individual interests and personal purposes. Duty, especially public duty, comes before all things else. Ambition, love, hate, personal interests or private aims, all must be subordinate to the sanctity of the stewardship of power.

Teachers' Preparation

In the present lesson we have the consummation of the great movement in the history of Israel—the organization of the kingdom. For the first time in its history, the people of Israel shouted: "God save the King" (X: 24). While it is remarkable that this tremendously important step was taken without violence and that the transition into the monarchy was made quietly and peacefully, yet it is not strange that with it there should have been misunderstandings and disappointments.

Organization of the Kingdom

Difficulty of Saul's Position

The position of Saul was an extremely difficult one. He stood between the authority of Samuel on the one side and the exigency of circumstances on the other. When these two came in conflict, as they did on the occasion of Saul's preparation to attack the Philistines (XIII: 8-9), there was trouble. Saul

waited seven days for Samuel to make the sacrifices which were customary before every military engagement. Samuel came not and Saul's forces were deserting. Thereupon Saul made the sacrifice himself. Upon his arrival, Samuel was very much provoked, and thereupon foretold the ultimate disaster to the House of Saul.

Attitude of Samuel

Perhaps this incident is illustrative rather than determinative. Samuel had not wanted a king. What Saul did here was to put the call of circumstance before that of religious authority. This was evidence that he would do that which Samuel feared, namely, put the civil authority before that of the priest.

Furthermore, the monarchy itself was an untried experiment in Israel. That there should be this conflict between royal prerogative and priestly privilege, was inevitable, although the monarchy seemed to justify itself by the incident that took place immediately upon the monarchy's institution—namely, the rescue of Jabesh-Gilead from the Ammonites. Samuel's opposition to the monarchy was not personal. He believed that it was incompatible with the theocracy, which was the form of government established by Moses, and after which he patterned the social organism. He feared, and, perhaps, justly so, that, when the monarchy came, it would mean the king first and God second. The incident referred to above seems to justify this fear. Upon the establishment of the monarchy and Saul's coronation and acceptance by the people, Samuel takes formal and public leave of the people and retires to private life at Ramah. (Chapter XII.)

Character of Saul

The character of Saul is one that excites our sympathy rather than our admiration. Physically, he

was well equipped for the office, being a tall and handsome man, of kingly bearing. He proved a forceful and resourceful warrior. However, he did not seem to have the stamina to stand up against the shadow of destiny, which Samuel had foretold to him and which he doubtless was able to perceive. He grew to be moody and melancholy, with bursts of insane violence. He resorted to strange forces, to witches and diviners, to stimulate his drooping spirit, when he should have roused his courage by confident trust in God. None the less, Saul deserves favorable consideration at our hands, for the unquestioned service which he performed in the military efficiency of Israel. He made possible the conditions and success of David.

Significance of the Establishment of the Monarchy

The establishment of the kingdom was, without doubt, a tremendous forward step in the history of Israel. It was the means by which the tribes were compacted together, not merely in a political, but also in a religious power. The sense of unity and solidarity which their national, i. e. political and civil union, gave them, was destined to survive the national unity itself and to remain a great factor in their history subsequent to the destruction of their political identity. It was the realization of the ideal of freedom that had been given to them in Egypt, and this was the stepping-stone to the higher ideal of their world-mission.

Lesson Material The Sentiment for a Monarchy

The continued attacks of the Philistines caused the people of Israel to recognize, that in order withstand them, the tribes would have to come together to make a common defense against their enemy. They were prepared in spirit for this unity by the work which Samuel had done among them. He had caused them to realize that they were

bound together by the ties of their religion, and that, indeed, they were brothers in blood as in faith, being all descendants of a common father. While Samuel was a beloved and honored judge among them, he was not a military leader. The people felt that they wanted some one who could lead them out to war as a united body.

Its Establishment Samuel's Objections

The people came to Samuel and asked that he appoint a king over them. Samuel was not pleased at this request, because he thought that they should recognize only God as their King. Hence, Samuel tried to dissuade the people from their purpose, telling them that a king would be a very expensive burden to them. He told them that the king would take their sons for his charioteers and his horsemen. He would force some to plough his ground, some to reap his harvest, and others to make his instruments of war; and that he would take their daughters to be perfumers, cooks and bakers. He would take their fields, vineyards, oliveyards, and the tenth of their seed, and give them to his officers and to his servants. He would take their best young men and use them for his work. Indeed, they would become his slaves.

The First King

But the people insisted, and when Samuel laid the matter in prayer before God, he was told to comply with the wishes of the people. In the tribe of Benjamin there was a man named Kish. He had a son whose name was Saul. This Saul was a handsome man, who stood head and shoulders above the people. One day the asses of Kish went astray, and he told Saul to seek them. It happened that Samuel was staying in a city nearby. Not being able to find the animals, and having lost his way, Saul went to consult the seer as to

what he, Saul, should do. When Saul came before him, Samuel saw that Saul was the man to be the leader over the united tribes of Israel. So Samuel told Saul to remain with him. Thereupon Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it upon Saul's head and said: "Behold, it is because the Lord hath anointed thee as chief over His inheritance." Samuel then told Saul to go quietly to his home, and that in due time he would be informed as to what was expected of him. It happened that on his way back Saul met a company of prophets. The spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and he prophesied with them. On noting Saul's prophetic utterances, the people said to one another, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Samuel called all the people together at Mizpah, and there publicly anointed and proclaimed Saul as King, the people shouting, "Long live the King!"

The Rescue of Jabesh-Gilead

Not long after this event the King of the Ammonites encamped against the city of Jabesh-Gilead. The elders of the city sent word unto Saul asking him to save them. Saul was among the herd in the field of his father when he heard the appeal. He took a yoke of oxen, cut them into pieces and sent them by messengers throughout the tribes of Israel. This strange act was an ancient mode of appeal to the people to rouse and defend themselves. It served as much as to say, "Shall the house of Israel be dismembered like these oxen?" thus calling upon them all to come to the rescue of their brethren. The people responded with a will, and under the leadership of Saul they marched against the Ammonites and completely defeated them, thus saving the city of Jabesh-Gilead.

Samuel's Farewell

Seeing now that Saul was recognized and established as King, Samuel gathered the people together and took leave of them. (Read the passage in Chapter XII, verses 1-15.)

The Adventure of Jonathan

It happened one day, when the Philistines were at war with Israel, that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said unto a young man, his armor-bearer, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' outpost that is over yonder." So the two went and made an attack on the Philistines, though Saul knew nothing of it. The sudden attack surprised the Philistines and threw them into confusion. Seeing this, Saul called his men and went after the Philistines. While pursuing them, Saul said that in order to make the victory complete no man should stop to eat anything; that if any one did eat he would be punished by death. It was a rash and unwise order to give. Jonathan did not know of the order of his father, and, wearied with the fight, he ate some honey that he found in the forest. Saul wanted to punish Jonathan when he heard that he had disobeyed the order, but the people would not let Saul do so, for Jonathan was the one who really brought about the great victory.

Saul's Disobedience

Some time after this Samuel came to Saul and gave him the message of the Lord, saying that Saul should go and smite the Amalekites because of the cruelty they had practiced when the Israelites came out of Egypt. Furthermore, Saul was ordered not to spare anything for himself, but to devote everything unto the Lord. Saul gathered his army together, made war upon the Amalekites and gained a great victory. But instead of obeying the command to devote everything unto the Lord, Saul saved some of the best of the

flocks for himself. Samuel came to Saul and asked him why he had disobeyed, whereupon Saul answered and said that the people took of the spoil, and the flocks and the oxen, in order to make a sacrifice unto the Lord. Then Samuel said: "Hath the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices as in obedience to His voice? *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken more than the fat of rams.*" Thereupon Samuel told Saul that in punishment for his disobedience and his rashness, Saul was not worthy that the kingdom should remain in his house. This was because Saul had shown himself to be unequal to the great task of the kingdom. He had hearkened to the voice of the people instead of to the voice of God, and while he was a good soldier, he was not a good ruler.

Lesson Presentation Point of Contact

When the Children of Israel received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, the promise they gave to the Lord was: "We will do and we will hear."

Obedience—Classic Examples

When the Persian hosts tried to invade the land of Greece, they were turned back at the pass of Thermopylæ, where three hundred Spartans gave up their lives in defense of their country, and their epitaph was written: "Tell it in Sparta that we died in obedience to her laws."

At the battle of Balaclava a command of six hundred English soldiers was sent, by mistake, against an overwhelming force of the enemy. The soldiers realized that a mistake had been made, yet without hesitation they rode into the valley of death in *obedience* to command. As the English poet Tennyson states it:

"Theirs not to reason why,"
Theirs but to do and die."

(It would be well to get a copy of this poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and read portions of it to the class.) The habit of obedience is one of the first traits that one can acquire. It is the first duty of the soldier, and we are all of us, so to speak, soldiers of God in the army of life. The laws of God, as taught to us through His work, and through the mouths of inspired leaders and teachers, are the ones that we should learn to obey without hesitation and without regard to possible consequences. Sometimes it may seem hard and sometimes the things we are told to do by our parents and teachers may seem to us unnecessary or even unreasonable. But even as soldiers obey, without questioning the commands given to them, so should we give our full heart and strength to the obedience of our teachers, our parents and our God.

While Saul was a good man and, no doubt, wanted to do the right thing, yet he failed in the one great thing necessary, that is, he had not learned how to obey. It was necessary for Samuel to say to him that, "Obedience is better than sacrifice." Strange as it may seem, kings and princes, who have the power to command, should be the ones who best know how to obey. Tennyson says, "Obedience alone gives the right to command."

The Higher Law

By "the higher law" is meant, that those who are in power must obey the higher law of God, and use their power for good purposes and not for evil ends. The great truth that Judaism teaches is, that the welfare of all is more important than the prosperity or the happiness of the individual. It is, therefore, the

duty of those who are in power and authority to use their power and authority for the general good and the public welfare, and not for their own personal advancement. This is what is meant by obedience to the higher law.

Obedience to Those in Authority

It is likewise the part of all to give obedience to those in power and in authority.

There is a story of a king who once set two men to work. He gave them each a bucket and told them to empty the water from a well and pour the water into a basket. With this command he left them. The two men set to work drawing water from the well with their buckets and pouring it into a basket. Naturally, the water ran out of the basket and flowed away on the ground. After a while one of the men said: "This is a foolish work which the king has commanded us to do. It is a vain work, for the water runs out of the basket as fast as we pour it in. I am not going to do this foolish work any more." The second man said: "The king gave us the command, it is simply our part to obey." But the first man was not satisfied, and he threw down his bucket and went away. The second man continued his work all the day, and when evening came the well was empty. Looking down into it he saw a beautiful gem shining at the bottom of the well. "Ah!" said he, "The command of the king was not foolish, for he wanted us to get this gem, and therefore, he told us to pour the water into the basket. If perchance, we had caught up the gem early in the day, it would have remained in the basket when the water flowed away." He took the gem to the king and was richly rewarded for his obedience.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson the point to be emphasized is that obedience is the foundation of personal and communal happiness. Likewise, in recalling the memory verse, explanation should be made of the word sacrifice, differentiating between the formal act of perfunctory worship, such as Samuel had in mind, and the sacrifice that one makes of himself for the sake of others. The latter is itself an act of obedience to sublime ideals.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write all names on the blackboard, read portions of the poem referred to, and the passage in the Bible mentioned.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures, Nos. 472, 473 and 474. Request the children to bring to the next lesson instances of heroic acts of obedience, such as they may have read or learned.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Samuel opposed to a monarchy?
2. What reasons did he give? Quote the Bible passage.
3. What was remarkable about the transition?
4. Were the people prepared for it? In what manner?
5. What conditions made Saul's position a difficult and delicate one?
6. Did he succeed in overcoming them?

7. In your opinion, could he have done so, and how?

8. Justify Samuel's vindictiveness against the Amalekites.

9. Discuss the character of Saul.

10. In what way was the establishment of the monarchy a great step forward in the history of Israel and towards the realization of its mission?

Lesson IX

David and Goliath

Lesson IX.—DAVID AND GOLIATH

Required Readings—1 Samuel XVI and XVII.

Memory Verse—"Then David said to the Philistine, thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the people of Israel, Whom thou hast defied." (1 Samuel XVII: 45.)

"I turned about and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the mighty." (Ecclesiastes IX: 11.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that mere material power does not avail either for a nation or an individual. The only permanent tower of strength is moral strength. The mightiest empires, the strongest men, have crumbled and fallen when moral corruption was present. The battle of life is of such a nature that its finest victories are not won by might, but by right; not by the body, but by the spirit.

Teachers' Preparation

This lesson introduces to us one of the greatest figures in Jewish history—possibly, next to Moses, the one who looms largest in the popular imagination. The two chapters that make up the reading for the lesson are somewhat contradictory. In the first part of Chapter XVI David is introduced to us as the chosen successor of Saul. In the latter half he is introduced to Saul as a skillful musician, who soothes Saul's troubled spirit. In Chapter XVII Saul becomes acquainted with David through his acceptance of the challenge of Goliath. It is difficult to reconcile these two intro-

The Position of David in Popular Imagination

ductions of Saul. It is therefore presumed that the two accounts are the accounts of different authors. From the narrative as it stands it is difficult to determine whether David became known to Saul first in his capacity as harpist or as the conqueror of Goliath. (See "David, His Life and Times," Men of the Bible Series, by W. J. Deane, note to p. 10.)

The Position of David in His Father's House

The childhood of David is invested with romance. Reported to be the great-grandson of Ruth, the Moabitess, he was presumed to have been the child of a slave and somewhat cut off from his brothers and sisters, not only in spirit, but also by disparity in age. We find that, when Samuel comes to Jesse's house, the seven brothers are brought before the seer. But David is not considered. He is summoned only when Samuel asks, "Are there more young men?" (XVI: 10-11.)

The Selection of Saul and That of David

We must contrast the selection of Saul with that of David. Saul was characterized by his personal appearance, his stature, his strength. But Samuel had learned his lesson, that physical strength and beauty are not the real requirements for royal dignity. (See XVI: 7.)

David spent his youth as a shepherd. Tradition says that, like Moses, he was chosen because of his fidelity in this capacity, as it is said: "David has cared faithfully for the sheep, therefore shall he be the shepherd to Israel, My flock." The twenty-third Psalm is by many considered an echo of this shepherd life.

The attitude of his brothers towards David reminds us of the relationship between Joseph and his brethren, though there was no paternal partiality in David's instance. On account of his youth he was

something of a servant to his elder brothers. (See XVII: 17-18.) Eliab, his eldest brother, speaks rather roughly to him. (XVII: 28.)

Rabbinical tradition says that Goliath was the destroyer of Hophni and Phineas, the sons of Eli, and the captor of the Ark of the Covenant. Thus there was an added sting to his insults and an added motive for his destruction.

The Effect of His Selection Upon David

Like that of Saul, the selection and anointment of David were at first kept from the knowledge of the public. The effect of Samuel's message upon David was very strong. It is said (XVI: 13) "that the spirit of the Lord came suddenly upon David from that day forward." By this is, doubtless, meant that the knowledge of his being chosen, changed him at once from a lad to a man. The sense of responsibility, of honor, and, doubtless, of elation, filled him and caused that enthusiasm which would brook no opposition to his purpose to meet Goliath. It is probable, that he undertook this task by reason of the fact, that he felt that it was incumbent upon him to be, at whatever risk to himself, the representative of the people over whom he was chosen.

The Personal Challenge

The challenge of Goliath to personal combat, by which the fortune of the war was to be decided, was not uncommon in ancient days and even up to a comparatively late period. "It was a custom of antiquity for champions to come forward, usually with words of derisive defiance, from the ranks of either army and challenge one of the opposite forces. This reminds us of De-Bohun at Bannockburn and Taille-fer at Senlac. Compare also in the Iliad—Paris and Manelaus, Ajax and Hector; in Livy—the Horatii and

the Curiatii." (Geikie: "Hours with the Bible." Vol. III, p. 158.)

Lesson Material

After it was determined that another family than that of Saul should take up the leadership of Israel, Samuel was directed by the Lord to go to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem of Judah. Samuel did not make known his purpose, but said that he had come to make a sacrifice and invited Jesse and his sons to take part. The word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying: "Regard not outward appearance, nor that which man looketh upon; for man looketh only with his outward eyes. God looketh in the heart." The seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel, but none of them was the chosen one. Then said Samuel: "Are there no more young men?" and Jesse answered: "There is yet the youngest, and he is feeding the flocks." Samuel said: "Let him be brought here," whereupon David came. David was a ruddy lad with handsome eyes. And Samuel knew that this was the chosen one. He took him aside and, whispering in his ear the important news, anointed him with oil. "And the spirit of the Lord came suddenly upon David."

The Anointment of David

David Plays Before Saul

Saul was much troubled by what had occurred, and he grew moody and melancholy. He was advised, that some one should come and play for him to soothe his spirit. Saul, therefore ordered: "Let a skillful player be brought to me." David, who was a skillful player upon the harp, was brought and played before Saul, and the charm of his music soothed Saul's troubled spirit.

The Challenge of Goliath

The Philistines, the constant enemies of Israel, became active again. Saul gathered together his army

and went forth to meet them. The two armies were drawn up on hillsides, with a valley between them, at the bottom of which ran a little brook. As they were thus encamped opposite to each other, Goliath of Gath, a giant of tremendous stature and strength, came out of the camp of the Philistines. He was clothed in a coat of mail, and the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam. He called out unto the people of Israel: "Behold, I am a Philistine. Let one of you come forth and fight with me. If he kill me then will the Philistines be servants unto Israel. If he be killed then shall Israel be servants unto the Philistines."

The men of Israel were disheartened, for none came forth to meet him and Goliath blustered to and fro, defying the army and the God of Israel.

David Takes It Up

The three eldest sons of Jesse were among the soldiers of Saul. David was at home. His father said to him: "Go down, I pray thee, and take some food to thy brothers in the camp, and bring me news of them." When David came to the camp he heard the boasting giant calling for a champion to meet him and defying the hosts of Israel, as he had done day by day.

When David heard this, he asked the meaning of it. David was astonished that no man in Israel had answered. He said it was a reproach to Israel, and that he would undertake to remove the same. Word was brought to Saul that a man was willing to go forth to meet Goliath. Saul forthwith caused him to be summoned. When David expressed his willingness to meet the giant in combat, Saul said: "Thou art not able to fight this Philistine, for thou art but a lad and he is a trained and mighty warrior." David answered: "Thy servant was feeding his father's flocks, and there came

a lion and a bear, and bore off a lamb out of the herd. Thy servant followed and slew them both, the lion and the bear. The Lord, who hath delivered me out of the power of the lion and the bear, will also deliver me out of the hands of this Philistine." Then Saul said: "Go, and may the Lord be with thee."

David Slays Goliath

Saul put his armor upon David and girded his sword upon him. But David found that he could not move in it, and he put it off. He took his staff and sling. He chose five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. Then he advanced upon the Philistine. Goliath was very angry that a mere lad had come to fight him and cursed David and all the people of Israel. Then David said: "Thou comest to me with sword and with spear and with javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts." Goliath went toward David. And as he did so, David drew one of the stones from his pouch, fitted it into his sling, and, with unerring aim, shot it at him. It struck Goliath in the forehead, entered into his brain and the giant sank to earth. David sprang upon him and with his own sword cut off the giant's head. When the two armies saw what had taken place, the Philistines became at once filled with fear and turned to flee. But the Israelites, with newborn courage, pursued after them and gained a great victory over their enemy.

Lesson Presentation

There was a man who had a country place upon which was a beautiful grove of trees. In the center of the grove was a giant oak, taller and thicker and stronger than any other tree in the grove. The man was very proud of this tree and said that it was the finest and strongest tree he had ever seen. One night there came a terrible wind storm. In the morning when

Point of Contact

the man went out to look, he found many branches of the trees strewn upon the ground where the wind had broken them off. But he found that all of the trees remained standing except his favorite giant oak. In amazement he went near to look at the tree, and he found that, though seemingly sound and strong on the outside, inside the tree was rotted and decayed. Therefore, it had fallen before the storm, in spite of its tremendous size and strength.

The Fall of the Roman Empire

History tells us that there have been many powerful empires in the past. One of them was the Roman empire which was at one time mistress of all the world and the conqueror of all nations. This was true as long as its people lived pure and clean lives. But the Roman people in the course of time, by reason of their wealth, became wicked and corrupt. When the storm of northern invasion broke over them, they could not stand up against it, and the mighty Roman empire fell, as did the tree in the grove.

There are people who are strong in one way or another. They have wealth or power or station or intellect or influence. They think that with one or more of these things they can conquer all things. So they can for a while, in sunshine and in fair weather. But when the storm of trial or temptation comes, they go down beneath it.

The Source of Real Strength

There is no lasting strength except that which comes from purity of purpose and from noble character. When Goliath stood up before David he was tremendous in his power and size, but his heart was wicked and corrupt. On the contrary, David thus far had been pure in his life and thought. He had cared

for his father's sheep with constancy and faithfulness. He was steadfast even when he knew that no eye was upon him and none saw what he did. In the silence and solitude of his shepherd life, he proved himself strong of heart in courage and faith. Therefore, the stone from his sling went true to its mark.

The Value of Trial

No doubt there were many trials and dangers connected with his shepherd life, as we may learn from his struggle with the lion and the bear. But these trials only served to make him still stronger in spirit. It is one of the reasons why God tries us. There is good in every pain that we endure, in every want we suffer. The Philistines had taken away the weapons of war from Israel. There were scarcely any swords or spears among them. Therefore, David was not expert with the sword or spear, and even had he been so, he could not have hoped to have met the giant on his own ground. But the deprivation of the ordinary weapons of war made, among other things, the Israelites expert with the sling. The wrong that the Philistines had done proved to be the means of their own defeat. This happens very often in life. The injustice, the unkindness, the wrong that we may do, often in themselves may produce the means by which we are punished.

The fight of David with Goliath is a symbol of the struggle of Israel with the world. The nations of the world have opposed us and cruelly mistreated us. They are powerful and we are weak. In comparison they are as a giant, and we are but as a mere lad. But the word of truth is a weapon of power, and though it be, as it were, the harp of Israel against the sword of the Philistines, the music of the law against the instru-

ment of might, yet the spirit of truth will prevail and the victory of right will be made sure.

In our own little lives there are giants, which we also must conquer, such as selfishness, greed, envy, spitefulness. All these things loom very large in our daily life, and it sometimes may seem to us that we are too weak to fight against them. But we must do so, as David did; fight in the name of the Lord, and with faith in Him, strong in our hearts. Then, too, we shall conquer.

Summing Up

In summing up this lesson, the effort should be made to emphasize the aim of it; that is, the superiority of moral over physical strength. Additional illustrations may be used for this, as also additional Biblical verses as *e. g.,* Ps. XXXIII: 16.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write names and verses on the blackboard. Read the Twenty-third Psalm as an illustration of David's shepherd life, showing how the comparisons in the Psalm are evidences of it. You can also compare the ancient anointment of a king with a modern coronation, as of King George of England.

Home Work

Bible pictures: Wilde's Nos. 438, 475, 477 and 685; also Tissot, No. 82. Ask the children to bring in at the next lesson the names of other celebrated giants in history.

QUESTIONS

1. What is your idea of the manner in which David and Saul first met?

2. In what way does the early career of David remind one of Moses?

3. In what way does it remind one of Joseph?

4. What advance in the conception of kingly qualities can be seen in the choice of David, over that of Saul?

5. What was the effect of Samuel's message upon David? Enlarge upon what is given on page 118.

6. Why does David occupy so great a place in the popular imagination?

7. Give an illustration of your own experience of the superiority of moral over physical strength.

8. Also of the manner in which you would compare, as suggested (page 121), ancient anointment with a modern coronation.

9. In the Lesson Presentation of this lesson, what paragraph appeals to you most, and why?

10. Deduce another moral, not given in the lesson from the incident of David and Goliath.

Lesson X

David Before Saul

Lesson X. DAVID BEFORE SAUL

Required Readings — I Samuel XVI to XIX inclusive.

Memory Verse—"He that is slow to anger is better than a hero, and he that ruleth his spirit, than the conquerer of a city." Proverbs XVI: 32.

"Who is a hero? He that controls his spirit."—Sayings of the Fathers, IV: 2.

Aim of the Lesson

To teach the value of self-control and of greatness of spirit, and the evil effects of a jealous and hasty temper. Especially is this commended to those who are placed in positions of authority and of power. He who expects to control others must be able to control himself. "The man is not free, who is not lord over himself."—Claudius.

Teachers' Preparation

In this lesson we come upon the fatal defect in Saul's character. It is a pitiable illustration how a man otherwise of strong and noble character is brought low and becomes guilty of base and even cowardly actions by reason of jealousy. Though David may be said to have saved Saul's throne for him and to have safeguarded it for him, and to have become a member of Saul's immediate family, yet Saul forgets all obligations of gratitude and ties of kinship in the bitterness of his jealousy over David's growing popularity.

After the incident of Goliath, David becomes a member of Saul's household, being appointed an officer in the bodyguard of the king. (I Samuel XVIII: 5.)

In this capacity David continues the attacks upon the Philistines with such extraordinary success that he is acclaimed by the populace in even greater terms than the king himself. Had Saul been really great of spirit, as we will learn later that Jonathan was, he would have been pleased with David's success. But in the blindness of his jealousy he seeks in an indirect way to get rid of David by continuing to send him on dangerous expeditions, in the hope that David might fall by the sword of the enemy.

Saul's Feeling Against David

The Marriage of David

Even in the carrying out of his promise to reward the conqueror of Goliath with the hand of his daughter, he stoops to a contemptible trick. Though Merab is virtually pledged to David, yet while he is off on an expedition Saul gives her in marriage to an Arabian sheik. David is not so much put out by this, as his affections were not centered upon her; he declared his willingness to accept Michal, the second daughter, who loves him, in place of the other, and Saul puts upon him the difficult task of killing one hundred Philistines, giving excuse therefor that this would take the place of the dowry which David was not in a position to bring. In this connection we are reminded somewhat of the incident of Laban and Jacob, though the details are not altogether similar.

The Teraphim

The image spoken of in XIX: 13 doubtless meant the Teraphim. The Teraphim (the name is plural in form) were ancient Semitic house gods, much like the lares and penates of the Romans. It must be admitted that Teraphim worship was quite common in ancient Israel, even in connection with the worship of God, though, as the people advanced in a better appreciation of true worship, the function of the Teraphim

was restricted to divination or to oracular purposes. We find that the custom continued even as late as the end of the seventh century. It was Josiah, the reforming king of Judah, who probably put an end to the custom. See II Kings XXIII-XXIV. (For further information concerning Teraphim see Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. XII, pages 108-109.) It will be well to notice that the song of the maidens, which brought Saul's jealousy to an acute point (XVIII:6), was not sung upon the return from the slaying of Goliath, but some considerable time later, when the continued successful expeditions of David had made him a popular hero.

Influence of Earnest Devotion

The influence of sincere religious devotion may be observed in the incident of Saul's pursuit of David when the latter had taken refuge with Samuel at Ramah. Both the several bands of messengers and Saul himself, though coming with hostile and vindictive purpose, were not only dissuaded from their purpose, but even moved to join in the service by the sight of the earnest and reverent devotion of the school of prophets.

It seems as though there was a sentiment, perhaps even a superstition, against forcibly entering a house at night, as Saul set a guard around the house of David to watch and slay him in the morning (XIX:2). A similar incident was in the case of Samson. (See Judges XVI:2.) In this connection it may be observed that the house of David was possibly built on the wall of the town, as he escaped from the window to the open field, as was the case with the spies at the house of Rahab.

Lesson Material

David now became a member of Saul's household. He served both as an officer in the king's guard, and when occasion demanded it, he played the harp to soothe Saul's moody spirit. As an officer of the guard, David continued to make expeditions against the Philistines, and because of his skill and his courage, he was uniformly successful. He succeeded in driving the Philistines far enough that the land had peace. Saul did not look upon the successes of David with a friendly eye. Instead of rejoicing that the people were saved and the country was secure by reason of David's successes, he began to be jealous of David. One day when David returned from a successful contest with the Philistines, the people came to the gates to welcome him, and the maidens sang: "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands."

David's Success and Saul's Jealousy

Saul Attempts David's Life

This brought Saul's jealousy to its boiling point. The next day when David was playing before him, overcome by his fierce rage Saul suddenly seized a spear and flung it at him. David narrowly escaped the weapon and fled from Saul's presence. It is really a pity to see a man of Saul's otherwise high character be brought so low by jealousy. In fact, this foolish madness of his spoiled the rest of his life, made him insensible to justice and to all feelings of gratitude or affection.

Saul had promised that whoever conquered Goliath the giant should receive the hand of his daughter in marriage. Saul now should have given his eldest daughter, Merab, in marriage to David. He said that he would do so if David would prove himself successful against the Philistines. David did not really care for this marriage, but, nevertheless, he went out against

the enemies of Israel and returned victorious. While he was gone Saul gave Merab in marriage to another man. Thereupon Saul said he would give his second daughter, Michal, to David if David would go forth again and bring back proof that he had slain one hundred Philistines. Michal loved David. So he went forth, although he no doubt knew that Saul's purpose was to really endanger his life, and came back with the proof that he had completed the task. Michal became David's wife.

David Marries Michal

During all this time Jonathan, the son of Saul, and David were very dear friends, and Jonathan did all he could to save David from the acts of Saul's jealousy, as we will learn in our next lesson.

Saul was really blinded by his jealousy so that he no longer sought even a pretext to harm David. He sent his servants to the house of David to slay him. They were told to watch his house and seize him when he came forth. But Michal, in her love for her husband, saves David's life. When the servants of Saul came to the house she told them that he was sick. The messengers returned to Saul with this information, and in his rage Saul told them to bring David sick or well. In the meantime Michal had induced David to flee, and when the messengers came back they found that David was gone.

David's Escape

David fled to Ramah, where Samuel was, and he told Samuel all that had taken place between Saul and himself. Samuel told him to remain there with him quietly and to take his place in the school of prophets which Samuel was conducting. In this way David was being helped for the great task that awaited him as the future king of Israel.

David at Ramah

After a time Saul learned where David was, and he sent a band of messengers to seek him out. When the messengers came and saw Samuel and David and the prophets at their worship, they were overcome with a sense of awe and reverence, and themselves remained to take part. A second and a third band of messengers were similarly affected. In rage, Saul himself came to learn what was the cause of their disobedience. He too, was moved by the spirit of peace and quiet faith, and his soul was filled with awe, so that he also took part in the worship of the prophets. And the people wondered and they said: "Is Saul, too, among the prophets?" Saul returned to his palace. But, alas, the change of spirit did not remain, and after a while his jealous hatred again filled his heart so that David was not able to return to the house of Saul.

Lesson Presentation

One time a little Holland girl was returning to her home. She was walking along by one of the great dikes that help to keep the sea out of the little country of Holland. She noticed at one place that there was just a little trickle of water forcing its way through a weak spot in the dike. Small as she was she knew enough to know that if that little crevice was allowed to remain unfixed, it would soon grow wider and wider and the waters would rush through the broken dike and overwhelm the land. So she put her finger into the crevice and stopped the flow of water. She called for help, but no one passed that way. She kept her place bravely all the night through. In the morning they found her almost unconscious from fatigue and exposure, but with her little finger still closing up the crevice. They knew that by her act she had saved them all.

Point of Contact

Stop Evil Habits at the Beginning

In our own life it is possible for us to avoid great harm by stopping it at the beginning. This is especially true of our own habits. Habit is a thing, you know, that grows with use, and though at the beginning it may seem a very small thing, yet it will continue to grow until it becomes stronger than you are. Especially can we say this is true of anger and jealousy. Jealousy is a thing that feeds upon itself. It grows simply by being permitted to exist. Anger is a fire and jealousy is a weed. The fire must be quenched and the weed uprooted in the very beginning, or they will grow beyond control and bring desolation and sorrow. The great harm in permitting anger and jealousy is that in our moments of anger and jealousy we do things that we would never do if we had control of ourselves, and which cannot be undone, though we regret them all our lives.

A Great Man's Penance

A story is told of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great English author and lexicographer. When he was a boy his father kept a book-stall in the market. One day, being ill, his father asked young Samuel to take charge of the book-stall. In a moment of foolish anger he refused to do so. As he grew older he grew wiser, and the memory of this act troubled him. His father was dead and he could not undo what he had done, nor could he forgive himself for his folly. Late in life, when he had become a great and renowned man, he went from London to the little city where he had lived as a boy. Going to the market place, he found the place where his father's stall used to be set up. He stood there bareheaded in a pelting rain, unheeding the ridicule of those who passed by. It was an act of penance by which he sought to ease the remorse that he felt for his angry disobedience. How many times there are

that we are filled with vain regrets over the hasty words or unkind acts that we did in anger or in jealousy. It is far better to learn to control ourselves than to regret in vain the things that come when we lose control of ourselves. As the sacred writer says: "Jealousy is cruel as the grave." (Song of Songs, VIII: 6.)

Summing Up

In reviewing this lesson care should be taken to give credit to Saul for the noble side of his character, and thus by the emphasis of contrast to show the sadness of the lack of self-control as evidenced in his jealous anger. Recall, also, the memory verses and cause them to be repeated before the class is dismissed.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, write names and verses on the blackboard. Point out Ramah and Gibeah, where Saul's home was, on the map.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures, Nos. 477 and 616. Ask the children to give incidents where unrestrained passion produced harmful result and where self-control was beneficial.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it said that Saul's jealousy was a fatal defect in his character?

2. Why was this jealousy especially culpable?

3. What was the dual position of David in Saul's household?

4. In what regard did the incident of Merab recall a similar one in the life of Jacob?

5. What was the immediate occasion of the violent outburst of Saul's anger?

6. Discuss the Teraphim.

7. Recall an instance in early history wherein they are referred to.

8. Deduce a moral, as you would in class work, from the incident at Ramah.

9. On what other occasion was it asked, "Is Saul also among the Prophets?"

10. In what way was David's stay with Samuel helpful to him aside from his escape from Saul?

Lesson XI

David and Jonathan

Lesson XI. DAVID AND JONATHAN

Required Readings—1 Samuel XIX and XX.

Memory Verse—"A friend loveth at all times; he is as a brother born for a time of distress." Proverbs XVII: 17.

"Many companions may be hurtful to a man, but a friend cleaveth closer than a brother." (Proverbs XVIII: 24.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach the beauty of true friendship and the necessity of mutual unselfishness for its existence. It is a test of a fine character to be able to rejoice sincerely in the triumphs and fortunes of our friends, as well as to be ready to help them in the time of their need and distress.

Teachers' Preparation

In this lesson we come to an idyllic chapter of Scriptural history. It reveals to us a beautiful side of David's life and the noble, unselfish character of Jonathan. The whole incident of the relation between David and Jonathan is one of the most attractive the Bible offers and shines out most brilliantly from the background of this troubled period. It places before us a picture of friendship such as has not been excelled by any in history. The conduct of Jonathan is particularly praiseworthy. He was placed in a most embarrassing position between his friend and his father. Though he could not help but realize that his father was utterly in the wrong, yet he was not less loyal to his father than he was loving to his friend.

The Beauty of the Story

Jonathan's Affection

The affection of Jonathan for David was a matter of instant growth. Yet it did not weaken; on the contrary, grew stronger with time and the difficulties and dangers that attended it. At his first meeting with him, "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." (XVIII: 1.) In his affection Jonathan strips himself of his princely robe and armor and bestows it on David. (Ibid 4.)

Though the favors seemed all on the part of Jonathan toward David, yet we will learn that David was grateful and ready to do his part to honor the memory of his friend when occasion offered.

Jonathan's Magnanimity

Jonathan was fully aware of David's popularity with the people. No doubt he was likewise aware, to a degree at least, of the possibilities of the future, namely, that David might supplant him on the throne. Saul foresaw this possibility. (See I Samuel XX: 30-31.) But while this fact inflamed Saul's anger and jealousy, Jonathan, who really had more at stake than had Saul, displayed the magnanimity of his character, literally his "greatness of spirit." It is Jonathan who warns David of Saul's continued antipathy; who, in the face of paternal displeasure speaks to his father in David's behalf and effects a temporary reconciliation. (XIX: 4 to 7.) It is Jonathan who undertakes the responsibility for David's absence at the feast of the new moon. (XX: 6.) It is Jonathan who at the end sorrowfully informs David that it is no longer safe for him to remain in the presence of Saul.

The New Moon

The advent of the new moon was quite an important festival in ancient Israel, as the calendation of the

year was lunar. It was celebrated as a festival with cessation of labor and with feasting. (See Numbers XXVIII: 1-15 and Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. IX pp. 243-244.)

The Excuse for David's Absence

Though intended as a test to ascertain Saul's attitude, yet the excuse offered for David's absence from the feast was a natural and valid one. (XX: 29.) In the lack of a central sanctuary the annual sacrifices were held by the heads of families of the various tribes. It was to such an occasion that Samuel came and at which David was first anointed. (XVI: 2-5.)

Lesson Material

In a former lesson we have a beautiful example of loving friendship between two women. (Who were they?) Today we have a beautiful instance of deep and unselfish friendship between two men, Jonathan and David. When David had killed the giant Goliath and had come into the tent of Saul to report it, Jonathan, the son of Saul, stood by and listened to the telling. As he looked upon David's face and heard the story of his faith and his courage, the soul of Jonathan was knit unto the soul of David and he loved David as his own soul. He took off his princely garments, even his armor, his sword and his bow and his girdle, and gave them to David. From that moment the friendship between David and Jonathan never wavered.

David and Jonathan Meet

Jonathan's Defense of David

When the jealous anger of Saul was aroused against David and he had thrown his spear at him so that David was compelled to flee, it was Jonathan who spoke to his father in favor of David. He told Saul of what David had done, how he had slain the Philistines and how through him the Lord had wrought a great salvation for Israel. He said to him, "Since

David hath not sinned against thee and since his deeds are very good, why wilt thou commit sin by shedding innocent blood, by slaying David without cause?" Saul harkened to the voice of Jonathan and promised that he would no more try to harm David. So David came back into Saul's house and he was with him as in times past.

David's Flight

But, alas! Saul's moody spirit and his jealous anger had grown so strong that he could no longer control them. One day when David was playing the harp before him, of a sudden the anger of Saul flamed forth and he sought again to pierce David with a spear. It was then that David fled. First he took refuge in his own house, but, being pursued, he, by the aid of his wife, Michal, escaped and fled to Samuel at Ramah.

The Test of Saul's Attitude

It was after Saul's attempt to slay David even at Ramah that Jonathan and David met again on the outskirts of the city. There David questioned his friend and said: "What have I done, what is my sin before thy father that he seeketh my life?" Jonathan, in his loyalty to his father, said that Saul could not really mean to do what his fierce jealousy had prompted and that he thought that Saul was at heart favorable to David. But David was not convinced, and so they agreed that they would make a test. The next day was the festival of the new moon and it was David's part, as the son-in-law of Saul, to be with the family at the feast with which the festival was celebrated. David proposed that he should be absent from that festival. If Saul noticed his absence, Jonathan was to say that he had given David permission to go home for this occasion. If Saul was satisfied this would serve to

show that his fierce mood had passed. Jonathan agreed, and the next day at the feast in Saul's household David was absent. The feast lasted for two days. On the first day Saul said nothing. On the second day he asked why David was not present. Jonathan said that, with his permission, David had gone home to Bethlehem to celebrate the feast with his family. Saul at once broke forth in a towering rage, and his anger was even against his son. He rebuked Jonathan for being friendly with David. When Jonathan protested that David had done nothing to deserve punishment, Saul became so ungovernably angry that he flung his spear at his own son, at Jonathan. Thereupon, in great sorrow, Jonathan arose and left the table.

David and Jonathan Say Farewell

By previous agreement he went out into a field, where David was hiding in some bushes. He took with him a young lad to carry his bow and arrows. He stood at some distance from where David was concealed and he shot three arrows at a mark. He sent the lad to get the arrows, and as he went he called out: "Behold the arrow is beyond thee; make haste and bring it." This was the signal by which David knew that it was not safe for him to return, and he continued hiding. Jonathan gave the bow and arrows to the lad and told him to take them back to the house. When the lad was gone, David came forth from his place of hiding. Thereupon Jonathan told him that his father's anger still continued and that it was no longer safe for David to remain within reach. The two friends talked earnestly with each other and gave each other pledges of loyalty, and then bade a sad farewell to each other. Jonathan returned to his unhappy home and David went forth to seek, where he might, a refuge from Saul's madness.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

Damon and Pythias

There is a story told of how in olden days there was a man named Damon, who was condemned to death for his resistance to the King, Dionysius, whom he considered a tyrant. Damon begged for four hours' respite that he might go and say goodbye to his wife and child. The tyrant refused the respite and ordered his immediate execution. But just then Damon's friend, Pythias, came up and, learning of conditions, he offered himself in place of his friend Damon, as hostage, and declared that if Damon did not come back in time he, Pythias, would be willing to be put to death in his stead. The tyrant was so taken with this offer that he not only accepted it but lengthened the time from four to six hours. Thereupon Damon sprang upon his horse and rode to his home. His servant, Lucullus, who loved him and did not want him to be put to death, killed the horse. Damon seized the horse of a chance traveler and rode fast and furiously back again. Though he met many obstacles on the way, he came to the place of execution just at the moment when they were preparing to put Pythias to death. Throwing himself from his panting horse, he ran to the place of execution and declared his readiness to suffer the penalty. When Dionysius heard the story of his remarkable journey, and thus beheld the willingness of these two friends to sacrifice their lives one for the other, he was so impressed that he pardoned Damon and asked to be received as one of three friends with them.

Jonathan's Friendship Even Greater

As beautiful as is this story of the friendship between Damon and Pythias, that of Jonathan and David is even more so. Jonathan himself every day had to meet his father's anger on account of his friend. It is much harder to meet even small dangers day after

day than it is to face a single peril, even though it be the greatest. Jonathan's friendship for David bore the test of daily trial and also was equal to the supreme sacrifice of life, if it had become necessary.

The Beauty of Friendship

The friendship between Jonathan and David is so beautiful because of the unselfishness that characterized it. This is the test of real friendship. To secure great friendship one must be worthy of it. It cannot be one-sided. It is a feeling that should be so pure and self-forgetful that there can be in it no room for doubt and suspicion. It is probable that Jonathan may have realized that David's growing popularity with the people might endanger his own prospects. But if he thought so he put the thought aside as unworthy, and there was in his heart no suspicion either of David's conduct or his character. There need not have been any, for, while in this first part all the favors were on the part of Jonathan to David, yet David was loyal to his friend, and when opportunity offered he showed that he was filled with the same spirit of friendship that actuated Jonathan. Real friendship is so fine a sentiment that the Prophet Isaiah, in giving praise to Abraham, calls him a "friend of God." (XLI: 8.)

Care in Choice of Friends

While friendship is a matter of feeling, yet it is also something over which we should exercise the control of reason. We should select our friends because of their character and because of the moral benefit that may come to us from our association with them. An ancient Jewish writer has well said: "When making friends, always take a step up." The writer of Proverbs also tells us that "many companions are hurtful to a man," while a real friend "clingeth closer than a brother." The sacred writer means to tell us that

indiscriminate companionship is bound to be hurtful. "Many friends" do not always mean "real friends."

A Test of Friendship

A test of friendship as well as a test of character is the ability to rejoice in the fortune of our friends. Many people are friendly as long as the other person does not seem to have an advantage, but this so-called friendship vanishes when they think that their friends are doing better than they are and they become envious. There is no room for envy in the heart of friendship.

Summing Up

In summing up this lesson, the emphasis must naturally be laid upon the unselfishness of friendship. True friendship is that which seeks no favors and is willing to endure hardship and bear burdens for the sake of others. This is beautifully illustrated in the conduct of Jonathan. The point should also be brought out that genuine friendships cannot be numerous and indiscriminate. The memory verses, respectively, illustrate these two points. Recall them.

Relieving the Tension

Ask the children for incidents of which they may know, wherein sacrifices were made for the sake of friendship. Without boasting, they may tell even such instances as may have taken place among themselves. Encourage them to tell of these instances. If any child shows a desire to illustrate any phase of the story by its own experience, encourage it to do so.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Picture No. 170. Ask the children if they can secure any other pictures on the friendship of Jonathan and David or of Damon and Pythias.

QUESTIONS

1. What earlier instance have we of Jonathan's courage? (See Lesson VIII.)

2. What significance would you attach to Jonathan's giving to David his robe and armor?

3. In your opinion, did Jonathan have any suspicion as to the possibilities of David's future greatness? Give reasons for this.

4. If he did, why does he not regard David as a traitor?

5. What phase of his conduct evidences the finest trait in Jonathan's character?

6. Did Jonathan's conduct have anything to do, in your opinion, with David's attitude of non-resistance towards Saul?

7. Why was the excuse offered for David's absence a natural one?

8. Why was the new moon festival an important one in ancient Israel?

Lesson XII

David in Exile

Lesson XII. DAVID IN EXILE

Required Readings. I Samuel, XXI to XXVII.

Memory Verse—"Seek ye the welfare of the city whither I have banished you and pray in its behalf unto the Lord; for in its welfare shall ye fare well." (Jeremiah XXIX: 7.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach respect for constituted authority. The peace and progress of a people depend in great measure upon its respect for law and for those who are in authority by virtue of the law. The conduct of David as given in this lesson is a fine example of respect for law and for those who represent the law. It is in line with Jewish teaching in this regard, the fruitage of which has been the law-abiding and patriotic spirit which the Jews have exhibited at all times and even in those countries which have most cruelly oppressed them.

Teachers' Preparation

The actions of David during the period covered by this lesson show him in a splendid light. It is true that he was at times compelled to resort to subterfuges and evasions, but while we cannot condone these, we must recognize that these things have been the unquestioned concomitants of warfare at all times. Forced by the stress of circumstances to become an exile from his native land, and virtually an outlaw, he carries on a sort of guerilla-like warfare with organized society, but nevertheless displays a splendid spirit of patriotism and magnanimity. Though he has great provocation on the one side and great temptation on the other side,

David's Patriotism

yet David at no time becomes a traitor to his people nor gives active aid to their enemies.

Self-Restraint a Quality of Leadership

His refusal to do harm to the person of Saul, even at the moment when Saul is in deadly pursuit of him, gives evidence of this spirit. Saul was the anointed of the Lord, legally constituted head of Israel and David had too profound a sense of religious reverence and civil respect to do harm to him. This is a proof of the quality of leadership which David so signally manifested in later life.

In striking contrast to David's self-restraint is Saul's ungovernable impulsiveness, which leads him to do wrong, not only to David, but also to those who befriended David. His slaughter of the family of Ahimelech cannot be condoned.

The Edomites

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the Edomites were as a thorn in the side of Israel during long years of its history. In the present instance it is Doeg, an Edomite who acts treacherously toward David. Hostility and treachery characterized the dealings of the Edomites with Israel. The king of Edom had refused to let the people of Israel, in their wandering from Egypt, pass through his land. This compelled them to make a long detour in order to reach Palestine. Again, the Edomites took an active part in the plunder of Jerusalem and the slaughter of the Jews, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. It was Herod, an Idumean, that is, Edomite, who wrote one of the blackest pages of the history of the Second Commonwealth. Edom was a name given to Esau and the Edomites were his descendants. (For further information concerning the Edomites see Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V, pp. 40-41).

David's Religious Sentiment

David's religious sentiment is evidenced by the fact that his first act, when he took flight, was to seek counsel from the Lord. This was the reason for his visit to Ahimelech at Nob. The fact that he was willing to make use of the show-bread indicates that while in Leviticas XXIV: 7-9, it may appear that the show-bread was intended for the priests alone, yet later it became customary for others besides the priests to be permitted to partake thereof. (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, pp. 312.)

His Feigned Insanity

The incident of David's feigning insanity at Gath is best explained by the fact that he did not wish to be recognized and thus have to break openly with Saul and with his own people. He had hoped to be unnoticed, and finding that he could not remain unrecognized in the cities, he went out into the open into the wilderness and into the strongholds on the mountains.

Gad

The Prophet Gad, whom we find mentioned in this connection, was probably from Samuel's school at Ramah. He is known as "David's seer." (I Chron. XXI: 9.)

David's Leadership Acknowledged

While David was virtually an outlaw and at the head of a band of outlaws (who were recruited mostly from those driven away by fear or resentment of Saul's actions. See XXII: 2) yet it seems that the people at large looked to David rather than to Saul for protection against the inroads of the Philistines. (See the incident at Keilah I Samuel XXIII: 1-7.)

Lesson Material

Seeking Counsel From the Lord

When David learned from Jonathan of Saul's continued enmity, he felt that it was no longer safe for him to return to Gibeah. Nor did he deem it wise to go to Samuel at Ramah again, nor even to his

home in Bethlehem, lest Saul should pursue him there. Feeling that the best guidance comes from on high, David went to seek counsel from the Lord through the priest Ahimelech at Nob. Ahimelech was alarmed at David's appearance, but David satisfied his feelings and induced him to give him bread to eat, likewise to give him the sword of Goliath, which had been kept at the Temple there. A man named Doeg, an Edomite, who was standing by, thinking that he might find favor in the eyes of Saul, went to him and told him what had taken place. In great rage Saul sent for the priest and in his wrath ordered his servants to put the priest and his family to death. None of his servants would obey his command. But Doeg, the traitor and tale-bearer did so. When David heard what had happened to Ahimelech because of his friendship to him, he was very much distressed. Not wishing to bring trouble upon others he fled and took refuge in a rocky cave that was named Adullam.

David's Care for His Parents

Here David was joined by a number of followers, men who had been badly treated by Saul or who were afraid of Saul's rash actions. David's first thought now was for his parents. He was a dutiful son as well as a brave man, and he did not wish to leave his good parents exposed to the enmity of Saul. He took them across the Jordan River and placed them with the King of Moab, who was friendly to him because, as you remember, Moab was the birthplace of Ruth, the ancestress of David.

David's Rescue of Keilah

Those were troublous times in Israel. The Philistines, as in former days, began to harass the people of Israel and to rob their fields, especially at harvest time. The people began, in a certain way, to look to David

for protection. The town of Keilah had been attacked by the Philistines and the inhabitants sent word to David to come and help them. David's men did not wish to answer the appeal of the people of Keilah, saying that they were in great danger themselves and could not help others. But David, seeking the Lord, found inspiration and courage for his duty. He went down, made a successful attack upon the Philistines and restored their possessions to the people of Keilah.

The Visit of Jonathan

Shortly after this David encamped in the wilderness of Ziph. Hither Jonathan came and for the last time, to see his friend. Once more they renewed their pledges of friendship. Then Jonathan returned to his home.

The Cave of Adullam

Saul with his troops set out in pursuit of David, who had gone back to his stronghold in the cave of Adullam. It was while David was hidden in the far end of the cave that Saul passed by and stopped in the cave to rest. He did not see David, for, as tradition tells us, a spider had spun its web across the mouth of the cave after David had entered. Seeing this Saul believed that no one was in the cave and therefore went in. While Saul was resting the thought came to David that behold, here was his enemy at his mercy. It seemed as though the Lord had placed him in his power. But said David to himself: "No, it is not right. Saul is the anointed of the Lord. He is the King of Israel. It is not right for me to raise my hand against him." So he simply cut off a corner of Saul's robe. When Saul arose and left the cave and had gone some distance, David also left the cave and going to the top of a hill at a safe distance from Saul, he called him and showed him the corner of his robe that he had cut off, and told him that it was in his

power to have killed him, but that he had refrained from doing so. Saul was very impulsive. Recognizing David's magnanimous spirit in sparing his life, he confessed his remorse for his acts and gave up his pursuit of David.

David Again Spares Saul

But Saul's good intentions did not last. At a later period he again pursued David and again David had him in his power and spared his life. This time Saul was sleeping in his tent with his general, Abner, on guard. But both were so soundly asleep that David was able to creep into the tent unheard. His friend Abishai, who was with him, urged David to kill Saul. "There is your enemy at our mercy. I can kill him with one stroke." "No," said David, "God forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed." He took Saul's spear and his cruse of water and left the tent. Going to a safe distance he called and awoke both Abner and Saul. Saul recognized his voice and called to him. David, bowing low in reverence to the king, answered him and said: "Why doth my lord pursue his servant? Thine eyes have seen how the Lord hath delivered thee into my hands, but I have spared thee." Saul was conscience-stricken and confessing his sin urged David to return and promised that he would harm him no more. But David, returning the spear, declined to accept Saul's invitation. So they parted and Saul gave up the pursuit.

David, Nabal and Abigail

On another occasion a man named Nabal, who was very rich, was shearing his sheep. This was a festive occasion in ancient days and a great feast was prepared for the shearers. David had protected the fields of Nabal from the attacks of the Philistines. Now he sent ten young men to him and asked that Nabal should give him some of the food for himself and his men,

in recognition of the protection that David had afforded him. But Nabal was very surly and stingy and he sent back a very ungracious answer to David. David made up his mind that if Nabal would not give him food he would come and get it. So he ordered his men to advance. Nabal had a very sensible and beautiful wife, whose name was Abigail. Upon hearing of the approach of David and his men, she determined to prevent the quarrel and to make peace. She knew of the services which David had rendered. So she took a generous portion of bread and wine and meat and fruit, and loading it upon asses, she went to meet David. She made a very gentle and gracious speech and urged him that he should shed no innocent blood. David was pleased with her conduct and touched by her appeal. His anger against Nabal died out and David thanked her for having saved him from the guilt of innocent bloodshed. Shortly after this Nabal who was a drunkard as well as a miser, died suddenly in a fit of drunkenness. On hearing this David sent to Abigail and asked her hand in marriage, which she consented to give.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

In the chapel of the Military Academy at West Point there are tablets to the memory of the generals of the Revolutionary War. On one of the tablets the name and the date of death were chiseled out. The inscription on the tablet reads:

"Major General

Born 1740

The Shame of Treason

This is the tablet of Benedict Arnold. He was a traitor to his country. His name is blotted out and

his body rests in an unknown grave in a foreign land. One of the noblest feelings in the human breast is the love of country. Every man should defend his country at all times in war or peace. The man who betrays his country to an enemy is guilty of a most despicable sin.

David's Patriotism

David had been very badly treated by Saul. Saul had several times tried to take his life. David had fled from Saul to seek protection with Samuel. Saul had pursued him even there. David fled again into the wilderness, enduring the hardships and dangers of the desert. Saul pursued him with an army even into the desert. Saul represented the country. David had thus great provocation on the one hand to forsake his country. He was, on the other hand, tempted by the kings of Philistine cities to join with them against Saul. But David was strong against provocation and temptation. Though he was virtually an outlaw, at the head of a band of outlaws, yet never did he betray his country by giving aid to her enemies.

His Service to His Country

On the contrary, his courage, his skill as a warrior and the power of the men that were with him, were all used to protect his country from her enemies. There is a beautiful lesson in this conduct of David. His actions sprang from a sense of reverence and a sense of respect for authority that lay deep within his bosom. He would not raise his hand against the anointed of the Lord nor against the King, though by doing so he would get rid of his bitterest enemy and pave the way for his own advancement.

Respect for Authority

This sense of reverence and respect should be in the hearts of all of us and should persist not only when things go well, but also when things seem to be

wrong. This is true not only with regard to our country, but also with regard to our city or town and all of its institutions. We should yield obedience and respect to those in authority. To our parents especially, where love should lend even greater strength, obedience should be ready and willing. In our attitude to our teachers in the public and religious school and the officers of any society to which we may belong, there should always be respect for the authority that is given to them by virtue of their office. If officials make mistakes or do intentional wrongs there are means of correction within the law. Violence and rebellion cannot be justified except in the most extreme cases where the law no longer serves the cause of right and justice.

Summing Up

In summing up this lesson instances of respect for authority should be given and the sentiment of the memory verse recalled, to show how this is a duty even under the most adverse circumstances. The history of the Jews will furnish plenty of material for illustration.

Relieving the Tension

As usual, names and quotations should be written on the blackboard. Locate Gibeah, Ramah, Bethlehem and Adullam on the map.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures Nos. 479 and 480. Ask the children to bring in for the next lesson a specific instance of patriotism or an instance of treason punished. Suggest the punishment of Nadab and Abihu as an example of punishment.

QUESTIONS

1. In what way does David's conduct give evidence of his possession of the quality of leadership?

2. In what way does Saul give evidence of his lack of this quality?

3. How is David's patriotism manifested?

4. How is his sense of reverence, for both Saul and Nabal manifested?

5. Why did he feign insanity before Achish at Gath? (See Chaps. XXI and XXVII).

6. Why was the King of Moab friendly to David?

7. How is David's leadership recognized by the people at large?

8. What part did the Edomites play in the history of Israel? With what other Canaanitish nation would you compare the Edomites in this regard?

9. In the first paragraph of the "Teacher's Preparation," the statement is made that David had provocation on the one hand and temptation on the other to become a traitor. Give incidents to which this statement applies.

10. Give another fine trait of character displayed by David that might have been used as the "Aim of the Lesson." Indicate how it should have been used.

Lesson XIII

Death of Saul and Jonathan

Lesson XIII. DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN

Required Readings—I Samuel XXVII to XXXI; II Samuel I.

Memory Verse—"I have always set the Lord before me and He being at my right hand, I shall not be moved."—(Psalm XVI: 8.)

Aim of the Lesson

To illustrate the difference between the strength of steadfast trust and the weakness of wavering faith. Constant confidence in the goodness and wisdom of God is the finest source of help, whereas the shadow of distrust or a sense of weakness in faith, find their reflex in the soul itself. David sought counsel of the Lord on all occasions and was strengthened for his work. Saul lost his trust in God at times and became correspondingly weak. He sought counsel from sorcery and divination and it availed him nothing.

Teachers' Preparation

The present lesson gives a vivid picture contrasting Saul's descending sun and the rising star of David. The incidents as given are finely appropriate for the moral doctrine contained in the aim, as evidenced in the one direction by David and in the other by Saul.

The Contrast

While David put his trust in the Lord, he did not sit by idly waiting for something to turn up. He did not ask the Lord to do *for* him, but to help *him* to *do* for *himself*. This point should be emphasized in the lesson.

David's Desperate Straits

David was put to rather desperate straits and he had to adopt desperate measures. He seeks protection

again with Achish, the Philistine King of Gath. He is compelled to do this because no place in Palestine was safe for him any longer. The correctness of his move is evidenced in that Saul gives up the pursuit, thinking that David has joined forces with the Philistines. This act of his probably prevented a civil war. But, as pointed out in the last lesson, David has no idea of breaking with his own people or turning against his own land, as events manifest. He is, at his own request, assigned the city of Ziklag as a residence. Here he is joined by many recruits, among them some mighty men of valor, who are beginning to see the turn of affairs. (See I Chronicles XII: 1 to 22, though doubtless these numbers are somewhat exaggerated.)

Ziklag

While at Ziklag David makes expeditions against the marauding Arab tribes that had been infesting southern Judea. His answer to the question of Achish (I Samuel XXVII: 10) is indefinite, not to say disingenuous, though doubtless this was likewise a necessity of the conditions. The protest of the Philistine princes against David's accompanying the Philistine army (Ibid XXIX: 4-5) was a great relief to David, as it provided an avenue of escape for him from taking up arms against his own people.

Saul's Waning Strength

Saul seeking out the Witch of Endor, is a proof of the condition of despair into which he had fallen. He no doubt recognized the growing strength of David and his own weakness in the defection of many of his own people to David. He realized, too, that the Philistines were taking advantage of the divided strength of Israel and were assembling to strike a supreme blow at him. He, no doubt, also believed that David would join forces with the Philistines. In his desperation,

he turns to a source which not only was under ban, but which he himself in his earlier days had helped to destroy. (Ibid XXVIII: 3.) The fact that he disguised himself to make the visit to the Witch of Endor discloses the unlawfulness of the step which he took.

Witchcraft and Sorcery

Witchcraft, sorcery and divination had long been forbidden among the Israelites. (See Leviticus XIX: 31; XX: 6 and 27; Deuteronomy XVIII: 11.) They were of very ancient origin and the Israelites no doubt clung to this superstition in spite of its prohibition.

The raising of the dead was a universal custom in ancient days, and was, no doubt, a relic of the earlier ancestral worship. It is supposed that those who pretended to raise the dead were accomplished ventriloquists. Isaiah (VIII: 19) speaks of their "whispering and muttering." (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume XII, pages 343-344.)

David's Sense of Reverence

The action of David with regard to the messenger who brought him the news of the death of Saul, is again illustrative of his sense of reverence and respect. There is no doubt that the stranger, the Amalekite, had invented his story (II Samuel I: 1-10) as the version given in I Samuel XXXI: 4-5, is probably the older and correct one. The man convicted himself out of his own mouth. His purpose evidently was to seek favor with David by announcing the death of his enemy. But he mistook his man, and the occasion again discovers the lofty and beautiful sentiment in David's breast.

The lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan is one of the most beautiful of the Biblical poetic passages. It is sometimes called "The Song of the Bow." It is first the recognition of one heroic soul by

another (for, after all, in spite of the fatal defect of his impulsiveness, Saul was a warrior and a hero), and then the out-pouring of the great love for his friend and brother, Jonathan.

Gratitude

The action of the men of Jabesh-Gilead is reminiscent of Saul's earliest achievement (I Samuel XI), and an evidence of the fine spirit of appreciation and gratitude which actuated them.

A New Law Established

The incident of the division of the spoil taken from the Amalekites at Ziklag (XXX:21-25), throws an interesting side light on the customs of those days. It reveals another splendid trait in David's character, namely, his sense of justice. Verse 25 states that the law established by David became a statute for all time afterward. It is curious to note that a law somewhat to the same effect is given in Numbers XXXI:27. Mount Gilboa is rather a range than a single peak, on the eastern side of the plain of Esdraelon, which was the historic battlefield of ancient Israel.

Lesson Material

David's position was becoming more and more difficult. He did not wish to come to an open conflict between his forces and those of Saul, as this conflict was bound to occur as long as he remained in the land of Israel itself. So, with his 600 men, he went over to Achish, the King of Gath, a Philistine city. When Saul heard that David had gone over to the Philistines he gave up the pursuit and no more continued to seek him.

David Takes Up His Abode With the Philistines

David at Ziklag

But David had no intention of becoming an ally of the Philistines. He simply wanted to remove himself as a cause of trouble to Saul. He asked Achish to let him live at some place where he and his men might

dwell in safety. Achish assigned to him Ziklag, a city in Judea. While living here, David would take his men and make attacks upon the Arab tribes of the south, who had been robbing the fields of the Israelites. While he remained at Ziklag, many of the Israelites, and especially men of war, left Saul and flocked to David.

His Escape from Service with the Philistines

Seeing the division in the ranks of the Israelites, the Philistines gathered themselves together for a supreme blow against Saul. Achish called David and his men to him and told him that he expected that they would fight with the Philistines against Israel. David did not wish to do this, but for the present, he could see no way out of it. He answered Achish, and said: "Thou wilt know what thy servant will do." But when the other Philistine leaders came to assemble they objected to the presence of David and his men. They said to Achish: "Cause this man to go back. He shall not go down with us to battle." They feared that David would turn against them during the battle. Achish in vain defended David, and finally told him that he would have to leave the ranks of the Philistine army. David was only too glad at the turn of affairs and readily withdrew and returned to Ziklag.

The Plundering of Ziklag by the Amalekites

But while he was gone a great calamity had happened. During their absence the Amalekites had fallen upon the city of Ziklag, knowing that the defenders were away and that practically only women and children had been left. This was just like the cowardly act of the Amalekites when they attacked the Israelites at the time of their coming out of Egypt. They now carried away the wives of the men who were with David, among them Abagail, David's own wife, and their children, together with all their possessions.

When David and his men saw what the Amalekites had done, they were greatly distressed. Some of the men even turned against David, saying that he was the cause of it, and threatened to stone him. But David, with his characteristic courage and faith in God, said: "Let us pursue them and overtake them." So at once they went after the Amalekites.

The Punishment of the Amalekites

On the way they found an Egyptian man in the field. He was a servant to one of the Amalekite chiefs, but, because he was sick and weak, he was cruelly left behind to starve. After giving him food and drink, David took this man along, and under his guidance, followed after the Amalekites. He went at such a terrific pace that when he came to the brook Bessor, two hundred of his men were so tired out that they could not go any further. He left them behind to guard the baggage, and with the other four hundred pressed on. He overtook the Amalekites and utterly defeated them. He brought back all the women and children, together with the possessions which the Amalekites had taken, not only from them, but from others.

Saul and the Witch of Endor

Meanwhile Saul, having given up the pursuit of David, knew that he must prepare himself to face the Philistines, who were now gathering against him. Alas, Saul no longer displayed his old courage and his faith in God. Instead of seeking help from God and placing his confidence in Him, he did a very foolish and wicked thing. He sought out a witch who lived at Endor and, disguising himself, went to see her and asked her how the battle with the Philistines would turn out. The woman pretended to call up the spirit of Samuel, who told Saul that he would be defeated.

We today know that such things as witches and magicians do not exist and cannot do the things they pretend to do. They are all of them imposters, deceiving those who come to see them. In olden days people believed in these things, and, although their practice was forbidden in Israel, yet some of the Israelites were given to this superstition. In his early and better days, Saul himself had helped to put witchcraft down.

The Final and Fatal Conflict

Had Saul put his trust in God, as David did when dangers and difficulties were before him, it is possible that the outcome of the battle might have been different. Saul went into the war with lack of courage and lack of confidence, and there could be but one result. The Philistines had encamped at Shunem. Saul and his army took their station above the plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon. The Israelites were defeated and took their final stand on Mt. Gilboa. Here he continued bravely fighting to the last, for in spite of his faults, Saul was a hero. Saul and his three sons, among them, beloved Jonathan, fell before the Philistines. At the last moment, not wishing that his death should come at the hands of the Philistines themselves, Saul told his armor-bearer to take his sword and kill him. But the armor-bearer would not do so. Whereupon Saul fell upon his sword, and the first King of Israel met his death in defense against Israel's enemies. The Philistines in their savage manner came to strip the slain. They found Saul and his three sons on Mount Gilboa. They stripped off his armor and fastened his body to the walls of one of their cities. But the men of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done. They remembered, too, what Saul had done for them in the beginning of his reign. Hence the valiant men of the city went by night, took the bodies of Saul and his sons

from the walls of Beth Shan, brought them back to Jabesh and buried them under a tree.

David Receives the News of Saul's Death

David was at Ziklag when a man came from the battlefield and told him what had taken place. David was greatly distressed. He asked the young man how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead. The young man said that he was an Amalekite; that he happened by chance upon the battlefield and he found Saul mortally wounded; that at Saul's request he had slain him; that then he took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm and brought them to David. David was too much overcome by grief to inquire closely into the man's story, but late that evening he recalled the messenger, who repeated the same story. Thereupon David said: "Wast thou not afraid to stretch out thy hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" David commanded one of his men to slay the messenger, for, he said, that his own mouth had testified against him.

David gave voice to his grief over the death of Saul and Jonathan in a most beautiful elegy. (Here explain the nature of an elegy and read to the children from II Samuel, Chapter I: 17-27.)

Lesson Presentation

There was a little boy flying a kite. The kite went high into the sky, so high that some gathering clouds came by and hid it from sight. A man passing by said to the boy: "Your kite is gone."

Point of Contact

Faith in the Unseen

"Oh, no, it isn't," said the boy. "But you can't see it," said the man. "No, but I can feel the pull of it," said the boy. It sometimes happens that clouds of trouble hang heavy and low in the sky of our life. It seems as though we cannot see help in any direction.

But there is One Whose help we can always feel; that is the help of God. Those who put their trust in Him can feel His loving care and guidance despite the darkest clouds.

Contrast of Saul and David

It was this which David felt and which Saul missed, and because of this we find a great difference in the life and character of the two men. It is not that Saul was a bad man. He meant to do well, but he did not have the faith that makes us patient under trial and in times of trouble. He gave way to his impulsiveness without stopping to think whether that which he was doing would be the right thing. The Psalmist in our Memory Verse (repeat it) tells us how we can hold ourselves strong and unmoved by angry passion.

The Lesson of Faith in Patience

The great lesson of faith is patience. A steadfast trust in God assures us that under His care and guidance all things will come out well and that we need but do our present duty day by day, without giving way to anger or discontent or despair.

When we are sick in body we call in a good physician, and put our confidence in him. If we believe in him and his skill and give ourselves over to him, it helps us amazingly to get well. If we doubt our physician and doubt the value of his treatment, it does us a great deal of harm, and may even keep us from getting well. Thus, in the sickness of our soul, and the weariness of our heart, we should put our complete trust in the Great Physician. The man, Job, who was a great sufferer (Job V: 18), said: "For it is He that woundeth and He that bindeth up; He smiteth and His hands do heal." It was this lesson that David had learned and Saul had not.

Summing Up

In summing up this lesson it is advisable to make a short summary of Saul's life, giving an estimate of his character and showing how various incidents of his life illustrate his character.

Relieving the Tension

Write all names and verses on the blackboard. Have the children locate on the map the various places mentioned. Recall other battles fought on the plain of Esdraelon.

Home Work

Assign to each child a slight task, to bring to the next lesson a short account, about one hundred words, of the various incidents of the lesson. Assign different episodes to different children.

QUESTIONS

1. What striking contrast in the characters of Saul and David do the incidents of this lesson disclose?

2. Justify David's going to dwell with the Philistines.

3. What was David's position while at Ziklag?

4. Justify David's disingenuousness with Achish, the King of Gath.

5. How does the incident of the Witch of Endor disclose the mental and spiritual weakness of Saul?

6. Discuss David's slaying of the messenger who brought him the news of Saul's death.

7. What was the basis of the gratitude on the part of the men of Jabesh-Gilead?

8. What double value has the incident of the division of spoil in I Samuel XXX: 21-25?

9. Describe Mt. Gilboa.

10. Give an estimate of Saul's character.

Lesson XIV

David as King—Hebron and Jerusalem

Lesson XIV. DAVID AS KING—HEBRON AND JERUSALEM

Required Readings — II Samuel II to VII, inclusive.

Memory Verse—"Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge againt the children of thy people; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord." (Lev. XIX: 18.) "Mine are vengeance and retribution, saith the Lord." (Deut. XXXII: 35.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that the desire for revenge is a weakness of character and the power to forgive a strength of character. Also that private vengeance is a violation of the law of God, in Whose hands alone is the punishment of sin. It is an indication of David's strength of character that he does not seek vengeance against his enemies when the power comes into his hands. In striking contrast to this is the cowardly act of Joab in the murder of Abner.

Teachers' Preparation

The period which this lesson covers—namely, the first seven and a half years of David's reign—is one of violence. There is virtual civil war. It is carried on between the tribes of Israel under opposing generals. Even after formal peace has been made, partisan bitterness and personal rancor still stain the pages of the narrative. It is to David's credit that throughout this period he bore himself with courage and revealed true greatness of spirit. He continued to display his reverence for divine law and his respect for civil authority. The murder of Ishbosheth, by Rechab and

Civil War

Baanah, was repudiated by him, as was that of Abner by Joab, even as he had repudiated the alleged slaying of Saul by the Amalekite.

David Proclaimed King by the Tribe of Judah—His Statesmanship

The tragedy of Gilboa placed David virtually at the head of affairs. He was so recognized by the men of Judah. But the ambition of Abner prevented such recognition by northern Israel and created a division. David proved himself to be a good statesman. His overtures to the men of Jabesh-Gilead (Chapter II: 5-7) showed that he bore no animosity against the followers of Saul or against those who had been kind to his household. This act not only won over the men of Jabesh-Gilead, but likewise did much to prepare for the gradual winning of all of the adherents of Saul. Again, upon his acquisition of Jebus, which became his final capital, and was renamed Jerusalem, he determined to make it the religious as well as the political center of the nation. Therefore, was the Ark of the Covenant brought from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem. Therefore, also, did he openly give honor to the presence of the Ark even in the face of the remonstrance of his wife, Michal. (VI: 20-21.) Therefore, also, did he wish to build an imposing sanctuary, though this was denied him.

The Theocratic Principle

What we might call the theocratic principle was strong in David. On all important occasions he "sought counsel of the Lord." Though this may have been a matter of state policy, it was really the expression of his own feelings. He was of a deeply religious nature and imbued with a profound sense of reverence.

Hebron

The city of Hebron, which was his capital during the first seven years of his reign, was a city in the territory of Judah. It is one of the most ancient cities in

the world still in existence, and in this respect is a rival of Damascus. It is identified with the early history of Israel, because it was at Hebron that Abraham made his first permanent home. (Genesis XIII: 18.) It was at Hebron also that Sarah died (Genesis XXIII: 2) and was buried. The Cave of Machpelah, which was the patriarchal tomb, is still to be seen in the neighborhood of Hebron. The phrase "cities of Hebron" (II Samuel III) doubtless refers to the suburbs of the central town, in which David quartered his troops.

Jerusalem

The city of Jebus was located also in the territory of Judah and was strongly fortified by both natural and artificial defenses. It was situated on several hills of unequal height with a deep valley between, through which ran a stream of water, the River Kedron. It was a saying that "the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend the citadel." It was a natural fortress and difficult of access. It was necessary that this threatening stronghold should not remain in other hands than those of David. Upon its conquest it was renamed Jerusalem and became the capital of Israel for all time. (For further particulars see Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VII, p. 118, ff.)

The Separation Between Judah and the Other Tribes

The division between Judah and the rest of the tribes is to be noted, as a fore-runner of the division that occurred later in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The action of the men of Judah in assuming the general responsibility, is a reminder of the act of their progenitor, Judah, who assumed the responsibility of all the brothers and pleaded for Benjamin before Joseph in Egypt. (See Genesis, Chap. XLIV: 18-34.)

The Return of the Ark

The return of the Ark and the formal act of placing it permanently in Jerusalem, completed the

elevation of that city to that of the capital. It was said that the Ark was brought back under the leadership of the prophet Nathan. (For the ceremonies accompanying the return of the Ark see I Chronicles, Chapter XVI. Read Ps. XXIV, expounded in Moulton's "Literary Study of the Bible," pp. 104-108.)

Political Marital Alliances

The several marriages which David contracted during his stay at Hebron (III: 2-5) were, doubtless, for political reasons. In the persons of Absalom and Adonijah they brought sorrow and disgrace.

Ishbosheth's Quarrel With Abner

The ground for Ishbosheth's quarrel with Abner (III: 7) was the current belief that to marry one of the inmates of the royal household was to aspire to the throne. It is hard to say whether such motive actually impelled Abner. In this connection David's insistence upon the return of Michal can be understood. (III: 13.) It was advisable both as a test of Abner's sincerity and power, and as a vindication of David's position as monarch.

Lesson Material

The death of Saul and his three sons on Mount Gilboa left the people in confusion as to who was ruler. David, feeling that he could now safely do so,

David King Over Judah

returned with his followers from the land of the Philistines and took up his residence at Hebron. Here the men of Judah proclaimed David as King.

His Overtures to Jabesh-Gilead

David learned of the action of the men of Jabesh-Gilead in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the Philistines and giving them honorable burial. He at once sent a message of kindness to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, saying, "Blessed be ye that ye have done this kindness unto Saul. May the Lord deal with you in kindness and truth. As for me, I will

reward you that ye have done this thing. Let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant. Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah hath anointed me as King."

Abner Leads Revolt

The men of Jabesh-Gilead received David's message gratefully. But Abner, who was a cousin of Saul, was not content to recognize David as King. There was another son of Saul left, whose name was Ishbosheth. Abner proclaimed him as King. The people were thus divided into two parties. It is sad that in causes like this people must go to war to decide their differences. The tribe of Judah followed David. The rest of Israel followed Abner. They met in battle at the pool of Gibeon. Here it was decided that twelve men from each tribe should fight to decide the contest. The young men fought, but there was no decision, so that a general engagement took place. Abner's forces were routed, and as he fled, Asahel, a brother of Joab, the commander of David's forces, pursued him. When the young man came up to him, Abner turned and commanded him to return. But Asahel persisted. A second time Abner told him to return, and Asahel refused, and Abner smote him and killed him.

Cessation of Hostilities

The forces of Abner took their stand on the top of a certain hill, with Joab and the forces of David opposite to them. Then Abner said to Joab, "Why should the sword devour forever? Knowest thou not it will be bitter in the end?" Joab recognized the wisdom of Abner's suggestion and withdrew his forces.

Abner Comes Over to David

Though there were no longer any pitched battles, still the country was divided between David and Ishbosheth. One day Ishbosheth had a quarrel with Abner, and finding that he was supporting a weak and

foolish man, Abner sent word to David that he was willing to come over to his side. David accepted the support of Abner. Abner visited David, was received with gracious welcome and dismissed with great kindness.

The Murder of Abner

Joab was away on an expedition when this occurred. Learning upon his return what had taken place, he was not at all satisfied. Joab was a splendid soldier, and for a long time a warm supporter of David, as we will learn later, but he was a man with a cruel heart and revengeful disposition. He sent word to Abner that he should return, declaring that David wished to see him again. Abner returned all unsuspecting. Joab drew him aside as if for a friendly conversation and basely killed him.

David's Repudiation of Murder

David was very much distressed at Joab's cruel action and he mourned publicly the loss of Abner; David openly declared his horror at the deed of Joab so that the people understood that Joab's action was not at the order of David. After the death of Abner, two wicked men, believing that they could curry favor with David, brutally murdered Ishbosheth while he was asleep. But David was too great-minded a man to wish to profit by such actions as these. He caused the two men to be put to death, as he had the Amalekite, who had confessed himself to be the slayer of Saul.

Jerusalem the Capital

Meanwhile, the Philistines seeing that there was division among the people of Israel, assembled their army again to strike a decisive blow against David. Two battles were fought, in which David was successful. The Philistines were compelled to retire. There was a city by the name of Jebus, some twenty miles

north of Hebron and also within the land of the tribe of Judah, which was a strongly fortified city. Indeed, its natural and other defenses were so strong that it was said that the lame and the blind could defend it. David determined to capture this city and make it his capital. He did so through the help of Joab. He renamed it Jerusalem, and by this time all the people of Israel having recognized his rulership, he established Jerusalem as the capital. The Ark of the Covenant, which had been captured by the Philistines and then recovered by the Israelites, was resting at the house of a man named Abinadab. With great rejoicing and a triumphal procession, David had the Ark moved to Jerusalem. Expressing his joy and gratitude, David danced before the Ark as it was borne on its way. His wife, Michal, reproached him for acting thus. But David said that in honor of the Lord there was nothing which he would not do.

Lesson Presentation

There were once two Scotchmen who wanted to cross a river. They got into a boat to row across. They took up the oars and pulled and pulled, and though they were strong men, they could make no headway. Finally one of them said, "Sandy, have you pulled up the anchor?" Sandy looked, and sure enough the anchor was still deep in the mud. It happens often in life that men who are otherwise strong are kept from doing great things because they are held back in the mire of evil thoughts and desires. This was the case with Joab. He was a man who was a great warrior, a fine soldier and a hero. But the desire for revenge held him like an anchor held fast in the mud. It was this desire for revenge which prompted Joab to murder Abner on account of the death of Asahel. It was this cruel disposition, also,

Point of Contact

Things That Hold Us Back

that, as we will learn later, made him guilty of another murder and finally made him a traitor to his country.

David's Greatness of Spirit

In contrast to Joab's spirit of revenge, we see the greatness of the spirit of David. He was ready to forgive even those who had sought his life. Just as he forgave Saul, so did he honor the men of Jabesh-Gilead for their brave action in burying Saul. Other monarchs in history were only too glad to get their rivals out of the way and to reward those who would accomplish this. But David bore no grudge. He did not seek vengeance. This shows strength of character and greatness of spirit. Some people think it is a sign of strength to punish their enemies. Some people pride themselves on being good haters. This is no true source of pride. On the contrary, it is something that holds you in the mire and keeps you from making progress. You have got to pull your anchor out of the mire. You have got to pull the mire out of your soul before you can advance to the full height of manliness and courage. The Bible tells us (Exodus XXIII: 4-5) that if we see the beast of burden of our enemy either going astray or fallen by the wayside, we must not turn ourselves from it, but must help even our enemy. The best way to get rid of an enemy is to kill the enemy with kindness. Every act of revenge is a violation of the law of God, in Whose hands alone are the punishment for sin and the reward of every deed. We are told in our Memory Verse to obey these sentiments. They are a test, an evidence of fine character.

Summing Up

In summing up, the Aim of the Lesson can be best emphasized by stressing the contrast between the revenge of Joab and the forgiveness of David. This

may be helped by reference to instances where revenge defeats its own purposes.

Relieving the Tension

Write names and verses on the blackboard. Have the pupils locate on the map the tribe of Judah and get the idea of its relation to the other tribes. Also point out the cities of Hebron, Jerusalem and Jabesh-Gilead.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures Nos. 632 and 482. Assign to one or more of the pupils the task of bringing in a short description of the situation and topography of Jerusalem. It would be advisable to get a book describing these things. There are hundreds of them in existence. (See Jewish Encyclopedia.)

QUESTIONS

1. What is the character of the period covered in this lesson?

2. In what incidents does David's action reflect credit upon him?

3. Is it your opinion that Abner was really devoted to Ishbosheth, or that he had a private ambition? Give reasons.

4. By what acts does David give evidence of statesmanship?

5. What principle of Government do we find David upholding? Define it.

6. Describe Hebron.

7. Describe Jerusalem. Give reason for its selection as capital.

8. What is noteworthy in connection with the division of the tribes as under the first years of David's reign?

9. What ground did Ishbosheth have for his resentment at the marriage of Abner and Rizpah?

10. Give a "Point of Contact" of your own selection for the presentation of this lesson.

Lesson XV

Bath – Sheba—Nathan the Prophet

Lesson XV.—BATH-SHEBA—NATHAN THE PROPHET

Required Readings—II Samuel, VIII to XII, inclusive. Psalm LI.

Memory Verse—"Let the wicked forsake his way and the man of unrighteousness his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah LV:7.) "Create unto me a clean heart, Oh God, and a firm spirit renew Thou within me." (Ps. LI:10.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that while in human weakness we may yield to sin, yet confession and repentance of sin will bring us the forgiveness of God. As Solomon has said (I Kings VIII:46), "There is no man that doth not sin," so we learn that even the greatest have yielded to temptation. The real lesson is that, having sinned, the duty is to confess one's sin and to seek for pardon. This in reality is a strength and not a weakness. Weakness consists in clinging to sin and in hiding it.

Teachers' Preparation

The picture presented to us by this lesson is one full of lights and shadows. It is a portrayal of strength and weakness. The weakness, however, was only momentary and the finer qualities of strength immediately reasserted themselves in confession and repentance. The story of Bath-Sheba is not a pleasant one. It is, however, an opportunity for a strong presentation of morals. We have, first, the naive honesty of the Bible writer that he neither glosses over the dark crime nor

Light and Shadows

seeks to condone it. Though David is a mighty monarch and a favorite of the Lord, he does not escape the consequences of his sin. The justice of God is splendidly portrayed. Likewise, His infinite mercy and pardoning grace. A very effective explanation of the Atonement Day may and should be presented in connection with this lesson.

The Point of the Lesson

The point should be brought out also, that while David yielded to his passion to commit a great sin, yet even here David's strength of character and the depth of his religious feeling were strongly brought out. When his sin is brought home to him he at once acknowledges his error. Moreover, David had the greatness of spirit to recognize the courageous performance of duty on the part of Nathan, and instead of bearing resentment, David makes him his trusted friend and adviser. He justified the verse of Proverbs (IX:8), "Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee."

The Greater Gravity of the Sin

While it may be said that the crime was committed during an age of violence and under an atmosphere that permitted much to an oriental monarch, yet it should be brought out that David's very position, as the head of his people, placed upon him the added obligation not to set before them an evil example. Emphasis should likewise be laid upon the fact that this sin threw a shadow over the rest of his life. That its consequences were not removed by the punishment of the death of the child, but that the seed was sown for sinful acts on the part of his sons.

The Civil Administration

The civil administration covered by this lesson is one of shining splendor, in sharp contrast to the moral shadow. Seated upon the throne of all Israel, it became necessary for David to make this throne secure.

In a succession of wars waged with contiguous nations, David subdued them all from the Syrians, on the north, to the Edomites on the south, including the Ammonites and Moabites and the inveterate enemy, the Philistines, whom he reduced to a tributary people. These wars served also to bring the names of Joab and Abishai, and several others, into conspicuous prominence, showing that David's military organization was highly perfected. It consisted of a nucleus of the body-guard of the faithful 600 who were with him in exile during the life of Saul. These men were known as Gibborim or "mighty heroes." They remind one of the Swiss Guard of King Louis of France. In addition to these were the various divisions of the army commanded by different generals.

Cruelty to Moabites

These campaigns brought with them the usual incidents of cruelty that accompany all war. One great blot on David's conduct is his treatment of the Moabites (II Samuel VIII:2). There are several excuses given for this really heartless treatment of captives, among them being a Jewish tradition, that the King of Moab, to whom David had intrusted his father and mother for safe-keeping, had ruthlessly put them to death. It is more probable, however, that the Moabites and their kindred, the Ammonites, had been especially troublesome, and David deemed it necessary to make an example of them. The charges of cruelties and of grave atrocities brought against both sides in the great European war of 1914-15, show that even in the 20th century war is no kinder than it was in the days of David. A good survey of these foreign wars is found in Chapter VII, "David, His Life and Times," by Rev. William Deane, in "Men of the Bible" Series. It is said that the entire period required for establishing

security covered eighteen years, from the time that David first ascended the throne of Hebron.

David's Grateful Kindness

In happy contrast again, to these scenes of bloodshed, we find David's gratitude and kindness as shown in his treatment of Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, and his desire to befriend the descendants of Saul. (See Chap. IX.) His treatment of Mephibosheth is especially noteworthy because of the latter's deformity, for the reason that in an age of physical violence, the physically defective were given but scant consideration. Recall the fact that Sparta was wont to expose defectives to perish, being useless to the state. It is to be observed that David found time in the midst of his military operations to place the civil administration of the state upon a firm foundation. II Saul, VIII: 16, gives the list of his officers, which includes not only those in command of the army, but, likewise, the priests, the recorder and the scribe.

Chronological Difficulties

It is not possible to give the correct sequence of the wars that are mentioned, as there is no attempt at chronological arrangement. It may also here be noted, that the incident of the bringing of the water from the well at Bethlehem, which is given in Chapter XXIII: 15-17, belongs, doubtless, to the period of David's residence at Hebron.

Lesson Material

Upon assuming the throne as ruler, over all Israel, David found himself at the beginning of a series of wars, whose successful conclusion made his people secure from their enemies for the first time since their entrance into Canaan. The Philistines, wisely fearing David, when supported by the whole people of Israel, hurriedly gathered an army to attack him. The battle was fought and the Philistines were so completely de-

The Wars for Safety

feated that they became tributary to the people of Israel, and were now compelled to pay tribute instead of receiving it. Following the Philistines, the Moabites were subdued. Then David turned his arms against the Syrians, who should more correctly be called the Aramaeans. (Locate Syria on the map, and, likewise, its three divisions, centering in the cities Hamath, Zoba and Damascus.) David took much spoil from these cities, including shields and crowns of silver and gold. The spoils were later used in the building of the temple.

From the north David went south and conquered Edom. (Locate it on the map.) David established garrisons in the midst of these conquered nations. He placed in each garrison a sufficient force to maintain his supremacy. His next conflict was with the Ammonites. This was forced on him by the Ammonites themselves through a misunderstanding. The Ammonites induced the Syrians to rise up and take sides against him. David set his two best generals, Joab and Abishai, at the head of the divisions of his army and each was successful. The Ammonites and Syrians both being defeated.

The Great Sin

But a very unhappy incident took place during this Ammonite war. Joab was in command of the army. David was at home in Jerusalem, because on a previous occasion, during the war with the Philistines, David came very nearly being put to death by a gigantic Philistine warrior. He was rescued by Abishai. It was then determined that David should no longer be exposed to danger, as his men feared that "the light of Israel would be extinguished." So during this war David was at home. One day he saw a beautiful woman on the roof of a house opposite to his, and he

fell in love with her. Upon inquiry he learned that her name was Bath-Sheba and that she was the wife of Uriyah, one of his warriors then with the army under Joab, fighting against the Ammonites. As soon as David learned that she was the wife of another man he should at once have put her out of his mind and heart. But, unhappily, his passion proved too strong. He sent for Uriyah to come to see him, and then sent him back to the army with a note to Joab, telling the latter to put Uriyah in the hottest part of the battle. David's design was successful. Uriyah fell in battle, while leading the hosts against the Ammonites. When Bath-Sheba's period of mourning for her husband was over, David took her unto him as his wife.

David Is Made to See His Great Sin

The great sin which David committed was grievous in the eyes of the Lord. The Lord sent Nathan the Prophet unto David. He narrated to him a beautiful parable. He said: "There were two men in a city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished. It lived together with him and his children. It ate of his own morsel, drank of his cup, and was unto him as his own child. Now there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to feed the wayfarer, but took the poor man's lamb." David's anger was kindled, and he said to Nathan: "The man who hath done this deserveth to die." Then Nathan said to him: "Thou art the man! Thou hast been made king over Israel. Thou hast received many blessings from the Lord, yet hast thou taken the wife of Uriyah, the Hittite, to be thy wife and him hast

thou slain with the sword of the children of Ammon." And David said, "I have sinned against the Lord."

The one bright ray of light in this dark story is David's immediate recognition and confession of his sin. He had done a deep and grave wrong, which was all the deeper and graver because he, as the king of the people, should have set before them an example of strength and courage. But, in so far as a wrong may be righted, did he atone for his act by his recognition and confession of sin and his earnest repentance thereof. (Here read Psalm LI; 1-6 and 12-19.)

The Death of the Child

A child was born to David and Bath-Sheba, but it sickened and died. David was very much affected, and as long as the child was alive he wept and fasted and prayed for its recovery. When the child died his servants were afraid to tell him of it. But David noticed their whisperings, and upon his asking they told him of the death of the child. Thereupon David arose from the ground, ceased his fasting and weeping, and took his place. When they asked him why it was that when the child was living he wept and fasted, but now that the child was dead he arose and ate bread, he said, "While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, because I said, who knows but that the Lord will be gracious unto me and the child may live, but now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I restore him again? I am going to him, but he will not return to me."

David's Conduct

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

Another act which we must record to David's credit was his treatment of the house of Saul. When he became King of all Israel he inquired if any were left of the house of Saul, as he desired to show kindness to them for the sake of Jonathan. There was an

old servant of the house of Saul, by the name of Ziba. He was called by David and informed the King that there was yet left a son of Jonathan, whose name was Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was a cripple, lame in both feet. He was a child five years old, when Saul and Jonathan had met their death on Mount Gilboa. His nurse, in her terror, had dropped him while in flight and his injuries were permanent. David ordered Ziba to bring Mephibosheth and his household to him. David restored to the son of Jonathan all of the possessions of his household and provided for him that he should live in comfort through the rest of his life, under the protection of the king.

Lesson Presentation

It was a fine and brave act that Nathan did when he told King David how he had sinned and told him in such a way that David pronounced judgment upon himself. There was a sublime courage in that "Thou art the man." David could not escape the logic of it or evade the force of it.

Point of Contact

Perhaps you may think it would be a good thing for each one of us if we had some one to tell us of our mistakes. So we have, and what is more, we are told before we do the wrong. We get a warning telling us not to do some things because they are wrong and sinful. Conscience warns us "this deed is wrong," and if we listen to the warning of conscience before we act, we will need no one to say to us, "Thou art the man," after we have acted. Unfortunately, we are not always as strong and wise as we should be and we do wrong in spite of warnings to the contrary. Even then we may learn a lesson from King David's conduct after Nathan had spoken to him.

Where Real Strength Is

It was a most unhappy thing that King David, as set forth in this lesson, committed so great and terrible a sin. We cannot excuse the great sin that he committed. We learn therefrom, that no matter how strong one may be as a warrior or as a king, however splendid his army and however fine his soldiers, his real strength must be of another kind. The Psalmist has truly said, "The King is not saved by the multitude of his army, nor is the strong man delivered by his great strength." (Ps. XXXIII: 16.)

The Lesson We Learn

And we also learn the important lesson of confession and repentance. When his sin was brought home to him by Nathan, David at once recognized and confessed his fault, and sought forgiveness of the Lord. This was an evidence of that greatness of character which we know that David possessed. We are all of us liable to sin. We make mistakes by reason of our human ignorance and we err because of our human weakness. Yet we feel assured that if we really repent and atone for our sins, God's forgiveness is always ready for us. This is the sublime teaching of our Atonement Day.

The Greater Sin

Worse than the sin itself is the hiding the sin or denying it. We may sin in ignorance or weakness, but we hide it through perversity and deny it through hardness of heart.

David's Sense of Justice

Now it was in David's power as an absolute monarch to have silenced Nathan by putting him to death. The sentiment of the age would have permitted this. He might have taken the life also of any one who would dare to question his act. But David's sense of right and of justice was too strong to permit him to do so base a deed. He did not add to his one

great sin anything in concealment or denial of it. Manfully he acknowledged his error and sought for pardon.

Summary of the Lesson

In summing up this lesson the stress is to be laid on the thought that is given as the "Aim of the Lesson," namely that sin may be wiped out through genuine repentance. Care should, however, be taken not to make it a theological treatise.

Relieving the Tension

The use of the blackboard and map should be continued for all names, quotations and locations.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible Pictures No. 483. Ask the children to bring in for the next lesson incidents of temptation met and conquered.

QUESTIONS

1. What characteristic of the Bible writers is shown in this story?

2. Why does David's conduct, even in his sin, show greatness of character?

3. Why was the sin doubly grievous in him?

4. What was the character of the civil administration of David?

5. What general character would you give to the wars David waged?

6. What can be said in palliation of David's cruel treatment of the Moabites?

7. What bitter insult justified the war against the Ammonites?

8. In what way does the friendship of David and Jonathan come to light again?

9. Recall an earlier parable in the Bible History.

10. Expatiate, as you would in class, upon the incident of David's fasting and praying for the child while it was sick and ceasing to do so after it had died.

Lesson XVI

Absalom

Lesson XVI. ABSALOM

Required Readings—II Samuel XIII-XXI.

Memory Verse—"Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place? He that is pure of hands and clean of heart, who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity and hath not sworn deceitfully." Psalms XXIV : 3 and 4.

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that conduct based on selfishness or vanity, or pride of person, cannot be truly righteous, nor acceptable in the eyes of God or man. Impure motives cannot bring forth pure deeds, nor produce permanently happy results, even though these may temporarily appear to be so.

Teachers' Preparation

The figure of Absalom evokes nothing of admiration or commendation, nothing even of sympathy for his final defeat and dramatic death. We can feel for the paternal grief that overwhelms David, but at the same time there is the consciousness that David's sorrow is a merited discipline sent to chasten him even as Absalom's death was the fully deserved consequence of his deceit and treachery.

Character of Absalom

Absalom seems to have been devoid of all generous feeling or noble sentiment. He was a cold-hearted schemer without affection or gratitude or honor. Even his avenging the dishonoring of his sister, Thamar, was not altogether unselfish. Had righteous anger at once flamed up in him, and had he immediately called Amnon to account for his foul deed, even modern sentiment would have condoned

the act as one necessary to protect the honor of one's home. But he waited two full years and then violated the grace and sanctity of hospitality by foul assassination. The thought irresistibly asserts itself that Absalom did not overlook the fact that the death of Amnon left him the oldest living son and the heir-apparent to the throne.

His Cunning and Treachery

His cunning in winning over the men of Israel to his favor is worthy of an astute politician of unscrupulous methods. His handsome face and figure, his rich apparel and carefully groomed person (see Chap. XIV : 25-26) were alone sufficient to captivate the multitude. Added to this were his genial bearing, his kindly condescension, his smooth flattery and carefully worded statements of what he would do were he in a position to dispense justice, his insinuations against his father's government, all constituted, as the poet puts it—

> "Smooth dissimulation, taught to grace
> A devil's purpose with an angel's face"—

and there is no wonder that he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." (See Chapter XV: 1-6.)

The Striking of the Blow

After four years of this sort of preparation (the "forty" in Verse 7 is a mistake), he deemed the time ripe to strike the blow. With further deceit he set out to do so under the pretense of fulfilling a religious vow. The details of the actual revolt make painful reading. Doubtless it is human nature that a strong, forceful character, such as David was, should make numerous enemies, and that the latter should seek to take advantage of his embarrassment to cause more trouble. There are, however, bright spots in the

picture, as, for example, in the fidelity of his friends and followers who shared his exile and misfortune, as Ithai and Zadok, and Cushai and Joab, his intrepid general.

The Wise Woman of Tekoa

The incident of the Wise Woman of Tekoa (Chap. XIV) is a reminiscence of Nathan's appearance before David after the death of Uriah. It was in the nature of a ruse to have the king convict himself by rendering judgment on a supposititious case of analogous character. Such pretense was not infrequently used in oriental countries. Tekoa is better known as the birthplace of the prophet Amos.

Absalom's Utter Selfishness

Absalom's burning the field of Joab in order to have the latter come to see him is characteristic of his unprincipled selfishness. In seeking to attain his own ends he was thoroughly indifferent to the hurt of others. The strong point to be brought out in the lesson is this selfishness of Absalom, not only that it wrought the evil that it did, but also that it undoubtedly prevented Absalom from acknowledging and repenting for his sins.

Contrast Between David and Absalom

Here lies the contrast between the greatness of David and the bitterness of Absalom. David was not free from sin, but his sins were the sins of a generous, passionate nature that had nothing of malicious cruelty or calculated intent. And, what is more important, he confessed his wrong and atoned for it. Absalom, on the other hand, was cold-blooded, calculating, full of treachery and of that vanity that will not acknowledge error or confess wrong-doing. The contrast in this direction is to be emphasized, for the difference made David capable of moral greatness and power in spite of his failings.

The Famine

With regard to the incidents in Chapter XXI, it is to be noted that this chapter is doubtless out of its chronological order. The incident of the famine, and that of the rescue of David (which has been referred to), took place much earlier in the reign of David, possibly shortly after his accession to the throne and while he was yet in Hebron. The alleged crime of Saul was then still fresh in the minds of the people. While it may not be possible definitely to fix their place, these events did occur previous to the revolt of Absalom and not after, as would seem to be the case from the sequence of this chapter. It has been suggested that this account was placed here as a kind of appendix relating the final ruin of the house of Saul, in connection with the incident of Shiba and Mephibosheth during David's flight and return. (See "David, His Life and Times," by the Rev. W. J. Deane, footnote to page 153.)

Ahitofel's counsel to Absalom that the latter should take possession of the royal harem (XVI: 21-22) was in keeping with the sentiment current in older days that this act was indicative of succession to the throne and the assumption of royal prerogatives. (See Lesson XIV, page 178.) Ahitofel was the grandfather of Bath-Sheba, but it is difficult to determine whether this relationship had anything to do with his desertion from David to Absalom.

Lesson Material

The effects of sin are far-reaching. The great wrong that David had done found an echo in his own household. Amnon and Absalom, two of the sons of David, had a bitter quarrel, because of a grievous insult which Amnon offered to Thamar, who was a half-sister of him but a full sister of Absalom. Amnon

The Quarrel Between Amnon and Absalom

was guilty of a great wrong, for which David should have punished him. But possibly the memory of his own sin tied David's hands. Absalom determined to punish him, but instead of doing so at once he waited two full years. Then he invited all the princes of the royal house to attend a sheep-shearing festival which he held. You will remember in the story of Nabal how the work of shearing the sheep was made the occasion for a festive celebration. Absalom had commanded his servants that when the feast was at its height and Amnon was merry with food and drink, they should slay him. This was done, and great confusion arose, all the other princes fleeing in terror. The first report came that all the princes had been killed.

Absalom's Flight and Return

David's heart was torn with grief over the death of Amnon and over the absence of Absalom, who, after this foul deed, had fled to Geshur. He remained there three years. Then Joab, the great general, knowing that David's heart longed for his son, prepared a plan whereby David might be persuaded to let Absalom return. He brought a certain wise woman from Tekoa and instructed her to go to the king and to ask his judgment upon a case that she laid before him. She said that she was a widow and that she had two sons. The sons quarrelled one day in the field, and one killed the other and remained in hiding. The relatives of the family demanded that the slayer should be delivered to them to be put to death. Then the mother would have no child at all. David told her to let her son come back to her and he would see that no harm came to him. The woman then made the application to the King's own case and urged that he should permit his son, Absalom, to return home.

David felt the hand of Joab in the matter, and on being questioned the woman admitted that Joab had instructed her to do this. David thereupon told Joab to go to Geshur and bring Absalom home. But while Absalom came back to Jerusalem and lived in his own house, he did not see his father, David. Two years passed. Then Absalom sent for Joab and said, "Why am I come from Geshur if I cannot see my father's face?" Joab went to David and pleaded for Absalom, and David sent for Absalom and kissed him and received him again as a son.

Absalom's Treason

But Absalom was unworthy of his father's loving kindness and forgiveness. He had neither gratitude, affection, nor honor. He was a vain, selfish and cruel man. He was very handsome, and was extremely proud of his personal appearance. He had long and richly flowing hair, which he carefully trimmed and guarded. He dressed in fine garments and spent his time in self-admiration. He prepared for himself a chariot and horses and had fifty men to run before him. Such vain and selfish thoughts cannot but lead to wicked deeds. Because of his vanity and selfishness, Absalom believed that he was and ought to be king. So he set out, craftily and deceitfully, to win the kingdom for himself. When the men from the city or the country came to the gates for judgment in their differences with each other, Absalom would move among them and tell each one that he was right, that the judgment should favor him. He would say: "Oh, if I were a judge in the land, so that every man who had a cause might come to me, that I might give him justice." Then, too, he would be as pleasant as could be in his manner to the men, would not let them give

reverence to him as a prince, but would take each one by the hand and embrace him as a brother.

The Rebellion

For four years Absalom mingled thus among the people and won their hearts from David, his father, for himself. Then he thought the hour was ready to strike the blow. He told his father that he wanted to go to Hebron to pay a vow that he had made unto the Lord, and David gave him permission to go. Meanwhile he had sent spies throughout the land to tell his followers to gather at Hebron. Then the sad truth became known to David, that his son Absalom, whom he loved so well and whom he had forgiven so much, had stolen the hearts of the people from him and had set up the standard of revolt at Hebron.

Flight of David

David was old and worn with grief. He gathered his faithful servants about him and fled from Jerusalem. Absalom, with his followers, marched from Hebron and took possession of the city and the royal palace at Jerusalem. The people were divided, and David, in his flight, found many who wept for him and came to offer their services to help. There were others, again, who cursed him and threw stones at him. He fled as far as the Jordan, and there stopped to refresh himself and to gather his faithful band of warriors together.

Absalom's Fatal Delay

Though Absalom was cunning, vain and full of deceit, he was neither wise nor able. He waited in irresolution after he took possession of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, David strengthened his forces. When finally he did pursue, David was prepared. The battle took place in the forest of Mahanaim. The forces of Absalom were routed and fled. As Absalom himself

fled through the forest, his long, flying hair, that had been his pride, caught in the branches of a low-growing tree. His mule ran from under him and left him dangling by his hair. He was discovered by one of David's men, who reported it to Joab. David had given orders that, whatever the issue of the battle, Absalom should be unharmed. In spite of this, Joab, who was a fierce warrior, drove his spear through the body of Absalom and killed him, and buried him there on the field of battle.

David's Return to Jerusalem His Grief

David returned to Jerusalem, but he was unconsolable over the death of Absalom. "Oh, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom!" he cried; "would to God I had died instead of thee." The overwhelming love of parents covers the sins and wickedness of the children, even when these bring sorrow and unhappiness. But why should children requite the love of parents with wrong and ingratitude? Why not give love and obedience and happiness in return for all that parents do for them?

The Revolt of Sheba

The rebellion did not cease at once with the death of Absalom. The people were divided again. The people of Judah remained faithful to David, but the people of Israel gathered under the leadership of a man named Sheba, of the tribe of Benjamin, and declared that they had no portion in David or his household. David appointed Amasa as general over his troops, no doubt because he felt resentful against Joab on account of the death of Absalom. But Amasa was rather slow and did not prove to be equal to the task. David then sent his trusty warrior, Joab, who put an end to the rebellion by subduing Sheba and his army at a place called Abel. But Joab stained his hands

again with blood by murdering Amasa before he set out against Sheba. David was now secure again in Jerusalem and the land was at peace.

Lesson Presentation

Once upon a time, in a deep wood, there was a stag that had very large and beautiful horns. Each day, as it went to drink at the brook, it saw its reflection in the water. It admired the broad spreading horns that grew from its head and turned its head from side to side to observe them the better. When it saw its legs it was dissatisfied and said, "Oh, that so beautiful a head and body should be carried upon such thin and scrawny legs." One day, when it was admiring itself as usual in the waters of the brook, it sniffed the scent and heard the horns of the hunters at some distance. At once it sprang away in flight. The hunters saw it and followed. Deep into the forest it ran, when suddenly its wide-spreading horns were caught in the branches of a tree, and it was held fast. Struggle as it would, it could not free its horns. The hunters speedily came up. "Alas!" said the stag, "the legs which I despised would have carried me to safety, but the horns of which I was so vain held me back to my death."

Point of Contact

The Sin of Vanity

How truly was this the case with Absalom. The plain, everyday, homely virtues of obedience, truthfulness, honesty and kindness, had he practiced them, would have carried him to safety and honor and happiness. But the pride and vanity and self-love that were to him more precious, were also the causes that led him to wickedness, to ingratitude and to disgrace and death. What is thus true of Absalom is true no less of all of us. It is no sin to be handsome and good-looking and wish to receive the favor and the applause

of those with whom we live and have intercourse. The sin lies in being so vain of your good looks or your gifts that, because of these, you forget all else and become faithless to every duty.

The Real Purposes of All Gifts

We should remember that the powers or the talents that we may have are, after all, gifts from God, for which we should be grateful and not vain. They are given to us not merely for our own happiness, but that through them we may bring happiness to others. The sweetness of the odor of the rose is given forth that all may enjoy it. The birds send forth their songs that all who hear may have pleasure in the melody. The beauties and wonders of earth and heaven, of valley and mountain, the glorious loveliness of sunset and sunrise—all these are for the happiness of man. They are the gifts of God. So, too, whatever of talent, of ability or gift of any kind we may possess, it was not intended that we should become vain and proud over it, or make it serve our selfish ends only. But it is merely an instrument with which we should strive to do God's work in serving to make others happy. It was because Absalom was so vain of his good looks and so selfish in the use of his gifts that he came to an evil end.

Vanity an Obstacle to Confession of Sin

Furthermore, it was because he was so vain that he did not confess his earlier sins, but went on and on in his wickedness. We learned last week that David had committed a great sin. But David acknowledged that he had sinned and repented and was forgiven. Absalom's vanity and selfishness kept him from acknowledging his errors, and led him to still greater wrongs, just as it was his long hair, of which he was so proud, that held him to his destruction. Jewish

tradition says that his hair was so long because he was a Nazarite, like Samson was, and had made a vow unto the Lord. And it was because he forgot God and thought only of himself that that which should have been his honor became the means of his death.

Summary of the Lesson

The intent of the lesson is to be brought out in the summing up, by laying stress upon the thought that through vanity Absalom misused his gifts and opportunities and, through vanity did not acknowledge his error. The memory verse illuminates the thought.

Relieving the Tension

The use of the blackboard and map whenever possible, for names and quotations.

Home Work

Wilde's Picture, No. 486. Let the pupils read all of Psalm XXIV.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the basic factor in Absalom's character?

2. Show how this, directly or indirectly, led to the various evil acts of which he became guilty.

3. Why was his avenging of his sister's insult not commendable?

4. Aside from his treatment of his father, give two instances that evidence his utter selfishness.

5. Discuss David's mental attitude during this trouble, *e. g.*, his attitude toward Shimei, who cursed him, and toward Absalom himself.

6. How does the incident of the wise woman of Tekoa differ from Nathan's visit to David?

7. Why is it thought that Chapter XXI is not in its chronological order?

8. Do you think Ahitofel's relationship to Bath-Sheba had anything to do with his defection from David?

9. Why is it stated (page 201) that this unhappy episode is to be interpreted in a measure as punishment for David's sin?

10. Who is the appealing figure in Chapter XXI? For what was Tekoa better known?

Lesson XVII

Last Days of David. Estimate of Character

Lesson XVII. LAST DAYS OF DAVID. ESTIMATE OF CHARACTER

Required Reading—II Samuel XXII; I Kings II: 12; I Chronicles XXI-XXII and XXVIII-XXIX.

Memory Verse—"God searcheth all hearts and understandeth the imagination of the thoughts. If thou seek Him, He will be found by thee." I Chronicles XXVIII: 9.

Aim of Lesson

To teach that perfect and unswerving faith in God will sustain through all trials and give strength for all burdens. David's life is characterized by his unswerving confidence in God's goodness and justice, even in the darkest and bitterest hours of his experience. It was this that made him so great as a man, so successful as a warrior, so wonderful as a Psalmist, so ideal as the King that Israel needed just at that period of its history.

Teachers' Preparation

The last years of David's reign are marked by comparative peace. After the collapse of Absalom's rebellion, there was some little difficulty in restoring David's prestige and his undisputed royal authority. Smouldering tribal jealousies were kindled into flame, and a new revolt was headed by one Sheba, son of Bichri, of the tribe of Ephraim. But Joab nipped it in the bud, and for the final ten years of David's life there was no more warfare. David busied himself in the collection of material for the building of the temple, so that Solomon had little more to do than the actual construction.

The Revolt Headed by Sheba

The Taking of the Census

The incident of the census and its resultant pestilence presents some difficulty. It serves also to show David again in the strength of his love of God and his reverent obedience to the divine mandate. There is no cause assigned for David's wish for a census. It was evidently as unpleasant with the people as it is termed displeasing in the eyes of God. Possibly it may here have been interpreted as a display of egotism, or as a reliance upon mere numbers alone. Joab protested against it in vain. The writer of I Chronicles (XXI) asserts that it was the "Accuser" (Satan or the Evil One) who induced David to undertake it. Tradition says that David's choice of the penalty was influenced by the thought that he himself would be subject to the pestilence equally with his humblest subject, whereas if he chose war or famine, he, as monarch, would be safeguarded and provided for.

Former Census Taken by Moses

Why the census should have been regarded as a sin it is difficult to determine. Perhaps if it were possible for us to divest ourselves of our present knowledge of the physical causes of pestilence, we might be better able to appreciate the state of mind of that earlier day of groping in the darkness of error and confusion. Moses twice took a census of the people (Exodus XXX: 12 and Numbers I and XXVI), though it is true that an expiatory offering was made at the time (see Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 652), so that there should be no plague. (Exodus XXX: 12).

Joab's Defection to Adonijah

The defection of Joab to Adonijah is a little surprising. He had been throughout so completely loyal to David, so jealous of his interest, that one wonders why, in this last instance, he was on the wrong side. It could hardly be that his knowledge of and participa-

tion in the circumstances under which Solomon's mother became a royal consort should have caused any resentment or moral indignation. Joab had been a conspicuous figure during David's reign. But he was a man of "blood and iron," a type of those who live by the sword and eventually die by the sword. He had two cold-blooded murders upon his conscience, those of Abner and Amasa, and likewise the killing of Absalom against David's express command. Doubtless he felt that David had never forgotten these things, and realized that under David's choice of successor he would fare but ill, and therefore espoused the cause of Adonijah. David's instructions to Solomon bear out this thought. (I Kings II: 5 and 6 and 28.)

David's Charge to Solomon

In this connection we cannot but observe that the last charge of David to Solomon reflects David's career as in a miniature. (I Kings II: 1-9.) It is a mixture of simple faith and violent action. The first half thereof (verses 1 to 4, inclusive) is a nobly beautiful expression of splendid sentiment. The second half, omitting the provision for the sons of Barzillai, is bloodthirsty. Perhaps there was something of fatherly concern in it. While Joab was undoubtedly a tower of strength to David, yet doubtless also there were times when David felt himself helpless before his too-powerful servant. Joab was the confederate in his great transgressions. While there is no evidence that Joab ever made use of it, yet his intimate knowledge of the great sin was a constant threat. It is possible that David did not want Solomon to suffer under the same constraint. Possibly, too, Joab's support of the claims of Adonijah rendered it advisable that Solomon should be independent of this veteran warrior. There was but one way to accomplish this. Joab him-

self recognized the logic of the situation and anticipates his doom. (I Kings II: 28.)

David's Strength and Weakness

The weaknesses of David were the weaknesses of his times. His strength was the strength of his individual character. (See Montefiore's "Bible for Home Reading," Vol. I, Chap. X, pp. 263-278.)

Lesson Material

The days of David are drawing to their close. After the death of Absalom a lesser revolt, headed by Sheba, the son of Bichri, of the tribe of Ephraim, was quickly brought to an end. David was again secure upon his throne at Jerusalem. There succeeded ten years of peace and prosperity. During this period David busied himself with the affairs of his kingdom and in gathering material for a temple to God which he wished to build, but which the prophet Nathan had told him it was not God's wish that he should build, as his hands were stained too much with the blood of warfare.

Ten Years of Peace

The Water of the Well at Bethlehem David's Disposal of It

Two little incidents throw light upon the character of David. One occurred at an earlier period, but is given here. David was camping near the Cave of Adullam during one of the campaigns against the Philistines. It was not far from his boyhood home at Bethlehem, and he was seized with a desire to taste the water from the well of Bethlehem, and said, "Oh, that one would bring me water to drink out of the well at Bethlehem, which is by the gate." An outpost of the Philistine army was then in Bethlehem. Undaunted by this, three brave warriors of David's body-guard, who had heard the wish, broke through the enemies' lines, at the risk of their lives, drew water out of the well by the gate and brought it to David. David was so touched by their devotion to him that he said he

could not drink the water they had secured with so much danger. He poured it out upon the ground as an offering unto the Lord. (There are several fine poems upon this episode by various authors, viz.: "David's Three Mighty Ones," by H. F. Lyte; "David in the Cave of Adullam," by Charles and Mary Lamb; "The Well of Bethlehem," by R. F. Littledale; "The Water at Bethlehem Gate," by Plumptre, etc. They can all be found in "A Hebrew Anthology," by G. A. Kohut, Vol. I, pp. 199-204.)

The Taking of the Census

The Penalty Therefor

At another time David determined to take a census of the people. It was displeasing in the eyes of the Lord. It seemed as though David no longer placed his reliance upon God, but upon the numbers of his army. There was also no occasion for it, as the land was at peace. Joab tried to persuade David not to do it. But David sternly ordered him to proceed with it. A grievous pestilence fell upon the land and many of the people fell before it. David was full of grief and penitence, and besought the Lord to stay the pestilence. He said: "Lo, I have sinned and done wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thy hand, I pray Thee, be against me and my father's house." The pestilence was stayed at the threshing floor of Arvanah, the Jebusite, and David built there an altar and made a peace-offering unto God.

The Revolt of Adonijah

The Formal Recognition of Solomon

The sands of David's life had run low. He was seventy years of age and had become feeble. The kingdom had been promised to Solomon, the son of Bath-Sheba. But Adonijah, his son by his wife Chaggith, claimed the throne, and securing for himself a chariot and runners, sought to assume the dignity and power of the throne. Joab, the veteran warrior, and

Abiathar, the priest, sided with Adonijah. When the news was brought to David through Nathan, the prophet, and Bath-Sheba, the mother of Solomon, he roused himself from his feebleness and once more displayed the vigor and energy of his younger days. He ordered that Solomon should be taken to Gihon, and there anointed and proclaimed as king and successor to David, that he should then return to Jerusalem upon the royal mule that was David's own, and take his place upon the throne as the king. This order was carried out by Zadok, the priest; Nathan, the prophet, and Benayahu, a mighty man of war, of whom we will hear more later. The news of this action came to Adonijah while he, together with Abiathar and Joab and a large number of followers, were at a feast celebrating his assumption of the throne. The guests were terrified and fled.

The Collapse of Adonijah's Cause

Adonijah saw that his cause was hopeless, and he hurried to the sanctuary and took hold of the horns of the altar for protection. Solomon pardoned him and said: "If he prove himself worthy, let him live; but if any wrong be found in him, he shall die."

The Last Hours of David

So David's reign came to an end. Solomon was firmly seated on the throne. David felt that his last hours were indeed now come, and, calling Solomon to his bedside, gave him his last words of advice, which again show David's deep love for God and his reliance upon Him. (Read I Kings II: 1-4, inclusive.) And David slept with his fathers.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

Alexander the Great, of Macedon, once commanded an artist to paint his portrait. The artist hesitated to do it because Alexander had an ugly scar running over his forehead at one side. This scar was

from a terrible wound that he had received in battle. The artist felt that Alexander would like to look his best in the picture, yet, to be true to his art, the artist could not omit the scar. So he posed Alexander sitting at a table, leaning his head upon one hand, with his fingers covering the scar.

The Scar on David's Character

How We Should Regard It

In drawing a word-picture of David, the great warrior and psalmist of Israel, we cannot but remember that he had the shadow of a great sin, like an ugly scar, resting upon him. While we would not hide it altogether, yet we can draw the cover of charitable thought over it, and look to the many great and good things that David did, rather than to dwell upon the sin that shadowed and sorrowed his life. In a measure, David's remorse and penitence softened the sin and God's forgiving mercy was given to him, and surely we can do no less. (Read the stirring outpouring of the 51st Psalm.)

David's Unfaltering Faith Expressed in Various Incidents

David's really great service to his people was the fine and unceasing example of faith in and reliance upon God that he gave them. From the very first, when Samuel anointed him while he was a mere lad, it is said "the spirit of God came mightily upon him." (I Samuel XVI: 13.) That spirit of God he always kept. To the Philistine giant, Goliath, he said, "I come to you in the name of the Lord, God of Israel." (Ibid. XVII: 45.) When he had Saul in his power he did him no harm, for he would not raise his hand against "the anointed of the Lord." When the man came to him and said that he had put Saul to death, David punished him for raising his hand against "God's anointed." (II Samuel I.) Even when in flight during the rebellion of his son, Absalom, he

murmured not against the Lord. In every trial or sorrow that came to him he bowed to the will of God. And when he gave his last advice to Solomon, he told the latter that only by faith in God can he accomplish anything.

The Psalms

Not only in these passages, but in the Psalms we find this same serene trust in God expressed. Not all of the Psalms in the one-hundred-and-fifty Psalms in the Bible were written by David, but some of them undoubtedly were, and these Psalms are beautiful, not only because they are beautifully expressed, but because they are the noble outpourings of a heart that knew God and confessed Him at all times. All that was great and good and heroic in David came from his trust in God.

The Influence of David's Psalms

Tradition says that David's harp hung at the head of his bed, and while he slept, the night wind swept the strings and sent forth sweet sounds and songs. David has been sleeping the last sleep for these many hundred of years, but the sounds and songs that came from the harp of his psalmody have been heard and felt by the men and women of many lands and many tongues through these centuries. This is because David poured forth the sincere sentiments and feelings of a heart that was filled with the thought of God. He has said beautifully that which all men feel. When you read the Psalms do you catch something of this noble faith? You can, if you read with your heart open to the influence of the presence of God.

The Eternal Sabbath

Tradition also says that the end came to David while he was studying the Torah on a Sabbath day, and that thereby the eternal Sabbath peace and rest

were his, which was meant to teach that the knowledge and practice of God's law are the surest means of our happiness, both here and hereafter.

Summing Up

In reviewing the life of David, stress should be laid upon the thought of David's implicit faith. It was this thing that the people of Israel, as a people, most needed just at that time, viz., the example of a leader and king, wholly imbued with the idea of the supremacy of God's sovereignty over even the civil kingdom. It was the lack of this that made Saul unequal to the task before him.

Relieving the Tension

In going over the life of David, ask the pupils to give incidents and acts that illustrate the thought you wish to impress. Write names and quotations on the blackboard.

Home Work

Wilde's Bible pictures Nos. 438, 381, 468. Tell the pupils to bring for the next lesson, an answer to the question "What incident in David's career impressed you the most and why?"

QUESTIONS

1. What was the real cause that underlay the revolt headed by Sheba?

2. What reason can you give for Joab's murder of Amasa?

3. What justification, if any?

4. Why was the taking of the census regarded as wrong?

5. Discuss Joab's defection to Adonijah. Upon what was Adonijah's claim to the throne founded?

6. Give an estimate of Joab's character and his service to David and Israel.

7. How would you characterize David's charge to Solomon, I Kings II, 1-9?

8. Give a number of incidents (no less than three) which illustrate David's reverence for divine authority.

9. What was David's really great service to Israel?

10. What to humanity?

Lesson XVIII

Solomon Becomes King

Lesson XVIII. SOLOMON BECOMES KING

Required Reading—I Kings I—IV and XI.

Memory Verse—"Oh, Lord, because of Thy strength shall a king rejoice, and through Thy salvation how greatly will he be glad." Psalm XXI : 2.

Aim of the Lesson

To show that the real power of a king lies not in his horses or his chariots, his army or his wealth, his dominion or his territory, but in the fear of the Lord, that leads to righteousness and justice and truth.

Teachers' Preparation

The reign of Solomon, which began with such fair promise and proceeded with still greater promise, was destined to end under the heavy shadow of disunion and revolt. Solomon was the third and last king of united Israel, and despite his own mental acumen, his illustrious name and the famed prosperity of the land during his occupancy of the throne, he produced only disappointment that the great possibilities that lay before him were unrealized, save only in material directions. With the heritage of David's name and influence, together with his own great gifts, he had the opportunity to strengthen the religious leadership of the nation, and to make this the basis of a moral power that would have been as mighty as it was unsurpassed. But he proved false to the promises of his earlier years. Tradition has enveloped his name with a halo of power and wisdom, but the final fruits of his kingship were disillusion and division.

The Early Promise of His Reign

Its Disappointment

The Claim of Adonijah

Though not the eldest living son, Solomon was favored of David. The veteran warrior and statesman seated him upon the throne, though Adonijah, aided and abetted by Joab and Abiathar, claimed the kingdom. His accession brings new names into the foreground. Joab, the very right hand of David in all his wars, and his associate in sin as well, is supplanted by Benayahu, the son of Yehoyada. Abiathar, the High Priest, is succeeded by Zadok. Adonijah, the rival claimant to the throne, is spared at first, but eventually is put to death for the same reason that led Abner to quarrel with Ishbosheth, i. e. seeking a royal concubine, which was considered an equivalent to an attempt to the throne. Shimei, another figure of David's time, is finally disposed of, when he oversteps the boundary of his permitted place of residence.

Adonijah's Undoing

Internal Disturbances and Their Effects

These internal disturbances attendant upon Solomon's accession gave heart to the enemies of Israel. Several of the surrounding nations that had been subdued by David arose in new revolt, thinking, doubtless, that, both David and Joab being dead, Israel would lack for adequate military leadership. Hadad of Edom, in the south, Rezon, the Syrian, in the north, the city of Hamoth, on the east (see II Chronicles VIII: 3) and the Philistine city of Gezer on the west, attempted to take advantage of conditions and free themselves from Israelitish dominion. It was doubtless these conditions that caused Solomon to make the several political alliances, which he did through marriage, with foreign nations. We read that the King of Egypt subdued the Philistines at Gezer, and gave the city as a wedding gift to Solomon. (I Kings IX : 16).

Entangling Foreign Alliances

That these marriages and alliances were more hurtful than helpful cannot be gainsaid. That which is morally wrong cannot be politically right. The luxury and corruption of a crowded harem, the evil influence of rival wives and concubines, the bitter jealousy and the unscrupulous intrigue concomitant to the efforts for the recognition of royal favor, were all factors for weakness. The tolerance and the recognition of the various idolatries of his heathen consorts, had a most demoralizing effect upon the religious union and stability of the nation, as well as upon private morals. During Solomon's lifetime the overwhelming prosperity of the land covered these weaknesses. Yet even during his lifetime, the burden of Solomon's extravagance and luxury began to be felt by the people. The taxes levied upon them to uphold all this material glory grew heavier with each passing year. There was no serious outbreak, it is true, while he lived, but the seeds of revolt had been sown (See I Kings XI) and his successor was made to pay the penalty.

Their Influence

Prosperity

Prosperity is the usual accompaniment of successful warfare. The prestige of David's military triumphs made Israel a name to be feared and honored and its favor eagerly to be sought. Solomon was shrewd enough to follow up his advantages. Because of his own extensive building operations and his far-reaching enterprise, there was great industrial and commercial activity during his reign. This led to economic prosperity, but also to moral degeneration. (This topic will be dwelt upon in the next succeeding lesson).

The Vision

The vision of Solomon and the nature of his request (Chap. III: 5-15), together with the famous judgment concerning the child claimed by the two

mothers, invested him with a sort of halo of wisdom and righteousness, which the mistakes of his later years did not dissipate. Psalm LXXII, presumed to be a prayer by David for his favorite son and successor, though given as by Solomon, has added to this impression. Solomon no doubt had meant to do well. He began his reign with an admirable mixture of firmness and clemency, with an evident aim for justice and righteousness. But he did not in his maturer years retain the ideals or remain upon the high plane of youth.

His Reign

His reign lasted about forty years, and in secular chronology is usually given as being from 1015 to 975 B. C. E.

For the many stories regarding Solomon's judgments, see "Legends of Patriarchs and Prophets," by S. Baring Gould, N. Y., 1889, pp. 341-370; "Legends of the Jews," by Ginzberg, Jewish Publication Society, 1913, pp. 125-176, Vol. IV; "Tales and Maxims from the Midrash," by S. Rappaport, London, 1907—passim.

Lesson Material

As David's end drew near, the question of his successor arose. Adonijah was the eldest son and set up a claim for the throne. In this he was seconded by Joab and Abiathar, the High Priest. But David had promised that Solomon, the son of Bath-Sheba, should succeed him, and he ordered Nathan the prophet, Zadok, a priest, and Benayahu, a warrior, to place Solomon upon the royal mule, David's own animal, conduct him to Gihon, and there to anoint and proclaim him King. This was done. Adonijah and his followers saw that their movement was vain and gave it up.

David Places Solomon Upon the Throne

David's Charge to Solomon

David charged Solomon with the task of punishing his enemies, which charge Solomon fulfilled upon ascending the throne. Abiathar was deposed from the High-Priesthood and Zadok made High Priest in his stead. Joab, realizing that all was lost with him, fled to the altar for refuge. But he was put to death upon Solomon's order, by Benayahu, who became head of the army in his place. Adonijah was not punished for his attempt at the throne then, but was assigned a palace for his own use. Shimei, who had cursed and stoned David during the latter's flight from Absalom (see Lesson 16), was likewise spared until he, too, transgressed the limits that had been assigned to him and was then put to death.

The Uprisings Against Solomon

Some of the enemies of Israel, whom David had subdued, tried to take advantage of these conditions to make war on Israel's power. Hadad, a descendant of the Kings of Edom, who had been living in Egypt, left Egypt and returned to Edom when he heard that David and Joab were dead. He roused up the Edomites against Israel, but Solomon prevailed against them. In the north, Rezon, a Syrian, wrested the city of Damascus from Solomon. While he did no serious harm, he was able to hold the city against Solomon. Within the ranks of Israel itself some dissatisfaction was aroused by a man named Jeroboam, of the tribe of Ephraim. But he was compelled to flee from before Solomon and went to Egypt, where he remained during Solomon's life.

Solomon Established on the Throne

When once established on his throne, Solomon showed himself first to be a wise king and one who wanted to rule righteously and deal justly with his people. Soon after he ascended the throne, there came

to him a vision at night. God appeared to him in a dream, and told him that he might ask for whatsoever he most desired, and it would be granted to him. Solomon did not ask for riches, or power, or glory, but for wisdom and an "understanding heart that he might judge the people truly and be able to discern between good and bad." God was pleased with this request of Solomon and granted it.

The Gift of Wisdom

Solomon became wise above all men. God even added that which Solomon had not asked for, both riches and honor. (Read from the Bible the passage covering this incident, I Kings III: 5-15 inclusive.) Tradition says that even while Solomon was a young boy, he assisted his father, David, in the judgment of cases that came before the King. He astonished all the elders by his wisdom and discernment, so that the people cried out "Praised be the Lord, who has given our king a son who surpasses all in wisdom, and who is worthy to ascend the throne of his father, David."

A Wise Judgment

There soon came a test of his wisdom. Two women came before him. They both lived in the same house and each had a child. One of the children died, and each claimed that the other's child had died and hers was the living child. The child was an infant that could give no testimony. It was simply one woman's word against the other's. Solomon said: "Let a sword be brought and hew the living child in two, and give one half to one and one half to the other." One woman said she was content. The other woman cried out:

"No, no, do not slay the child, rather let the other have the living child, than that it should be slain." Then said Solomon, "Give the child to this woman, for she is the mother. Her love is so great that she would rather give up her child than see it slain."

Peace and Prosperity

Solomon ruled in peace over all Israel. The land prospered and the people, undisturbed by outward enemies, engaged happily in their pursuits of industry, agriculture and commerce. Under these conditions, Solomon began the building of the Temple of God, which his father had wanted to do before him, but which had been denied to David.

Lesson Presentation

There is a familiar story, that once a conceited teacher was being ferried across a wide river in a little boat. Speaking to the ferryman, the teacher asked him if he had ever learned Latin. "No," said the ferryman. "Then one-quarter of your life is gone," replied the teacher. "Have you ever studied geometry?" he asked further. Again the ferryman said "No." "Then half your life is gone." Suddenly the boat bumped into a rock. A hole was made in its side and the boat began to fill with water. "Have you ever learned to swim?" said the ferryman to the teacher. "No," said the teacher. "Then all of your life is gone," said the ferryman.

Point of Contact

Book-learning and school-wisdom are very fine things, and everybody ought to secure as thorough an education as he can. But, after all, there is a wisdom that is greater than the wisdom of the mind. It is the

wisdom of the heart. Solomon was a very wise man, wiser than all of his generation, but his wisdom was mind-wisdom, rather than heart-wisdom, and, as we will learn, this mind-wisdom did not keep him from making serious mistakes in life, and from doing great wrongs that led to evil results. The Book of Job (XXVIII: 28) rightly says: "Behold the fear of God is real wisdom, and to depart from evil is true understanding." The Book of Psalms (CXI: 10) and the Book of Proverbs (IX: 10) also say "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God is true understanding."

The Fear of God

The "fear of God" is a familiar phrase. The word "fear" does not mean so much fright or terror, as it means, in this connection, respect and veneration. The thought of God should be with us in all things that we learn. The wonders of the earth, the marvels of the sky, the mysteries of all the forces and agencies and powers that are constantly at work in the universe, are things about which we study. We have learned much about them. We are learning more and more, as our scholars, inventors, discoverers and explorers give us the fruit of their studies. The more knowledge we get, the deeper grows our wonder and awe at the wisdom and powers of the great Creator. The laws that He gave us for the conduct of our life are as necessary to be obeyed, and their action is as sure and as certain as the laws of the physical world. Had King Solomon been as wise in heart as he was in mind, and remembered the source of his, and of all wisdom, he would

have been a greater and a better man than he proved to be.

Summary

The importance of this lies in its being a preparation for the lessons that follow. Solomon is to be given all credit for his great mental ability. His name is a synonym for wisdom as Samson's is for strength. But neither the wisdom of the one, nor the strength of the other, saved them from folly and weakness. This is the thought to be brought out in the summary.

Relieving the Tension

Write all names and verses on the blackboard. Illustrate Solomon's keenness and acumen by the narration of one or more stories included in the various references given.

Home Work

Wilde's Pictures Nos. 488 and 628. Have each pupil memorize a verse of his own selection from the Book of Proverbs, illustrative of Solomon's wisdom, and recite it at the next lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the domestic conditions in Israel at the time of Solomon's accession?

2. What were the foreign conditions, and in what way were they connected with the domestic?

3. What claim had Adonijah to the throne?

4. Why did David give to Solomon such a charge as he did concerning Joab and Shimei?

5. Can you justify with Biblical quotation the slaying of Joab at the altar, where he had sought refuge?

6. What were the reasons of state behind Solomon's marital alliances?

7. What were the injurious effects of these intermarriages?

8. Why did Solomon's reign promise so much?

9. And why did it fail of its promise?

10. Religiously speaking, in what direction was Solomon inferior to David?

Lesson XIX

Solomon's Reign—The Building of the Temple

Lesson XIX. SOLOMON'S REIGN—THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Required Readings—1 Kings VIII-X.

Memory Verse—"In truth will God dwell upon the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built." (I Kings VIII: 27.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that the true value of worship lies not in the forms of the things whereby one worships, but in the spirit of the worshipper. While it is becoming that we should give to the house of God of the best and the richest and finest that we have, as a symbol of our veneration, and of His majesty, yet marble and stone and silk and jewels and velvet and stained glass do not make a house of prayer, if the heart of the worshipper does not hold reverence, devotion and humble loyalty.

Teachers' Preparation

The building operations carried on by Solomon were very far-reaching in their effect. They not only made for the unexampled prosperity and commercial activity that characterized his reign, but they were also a shrewd political move. They served, as no other means could have done, to make Jerusalem the capital of the country in more than a geographical sense. The royal palace as the social, and the temple as the religious centers, drew the eyes of all the people, the serious-minded and the frivolous, to the city of David's choice. They strengthened the national consciousness and religious unity to a great degree. They gave

Jerusalem a position that has remained unassailed in the minds of men of all generations, even though it has since been sadly shorn of its material splendor and glory.

The industrial prosperity that characterized Solomon's reign followed naturally from the great building operations, which were undertaken and completed.

These comprised not only the temple and the royal palace, but also handsome and stately private palaces that were built by individuals of means, following the royal example. The maintenance of the royal household was very costly. Not only was there a large harem, but the life at court was very luxurious. Great entertainments were provided for the embassies of foreign nations that visited Jerusalem from time to time.

Commercially, Solomon extended the fame of Palestine and its activities. He opened up new roads and made safe, by means of alliance, the old caravan highways that led to Babylon and India. He developed, with the aid of Phoenician sailors, a great maritime trade that covered the Indian ocean and the Mediterannean ports from the Bosphorus to the Straits of Gibraltar. The ships of Tarshish, mentioned in I Kings X:22 and XXII:49, meant large ships, sufficiently large to cross the inland sea to Tartessus, on the lower coast of Spain. It is possible that there was also a port Tartessus on the Red Sea, on the road to India. Freight from India was carried by water to Ezion-Geber, the last northern port on the Red Sea, and then by caravan to Jerusalem.

Use of Horses

He imported for his personal and military service horses from Egypt from his father-in-law, the Egyptian ruler. War chariots became a part of the regular

army, and were famed throughout the land. (See Song of Songs I:9.)

Establishment of Priestly Cult

The building of the temple likewise re-established on a firm basis the importance of the priestly system. It was only natural that so splendid a temple should have no less splendid a service. Ministering priests, singers and attendants were organized and an elaborate temple service arranged. This central sanctuary was to replace the many little altars that had sprung up throughout the land.

Prayer of Dedication

The completion and dedication of the temple was made the occasion of great rejoicing and celebration. The ark was transferred from its temporary resting place amidst great acclamation and the happiest of auguries. Solomon's prayer of dedication is a noble utterance, portions of it rising to the loftiest heights of spiritual beauty and universalistic idealism.

Hiram, King of Tyre

Hiram, the king of Tyre, was the son of a Jewish mother, of the tribe of Napthali, and a Canaanitish father. His friendship and co-operation were of the greatest assistance to Solomon, in both his building and commercial activities. He furnished cedar beams and skilled workmen for the Temple, helped Solomon in the building and maintenance of the roadways, and permitted him to share in the rich maritime trade that he controlled. His contempt for the provinces which Solomon assigned to him as a reward (I Kings IX: 12-13) did not seem to affect their friendly relations. Tradition says that the huge logs from the Lebanon were floated down the coast, in great rafts, from Tyre to Joppa, and from the latter place transported overland to Jerusalem.

The Visit of the Queen of Sheba

The visit of the Queen of Sheba, aside from the romance and traditional narratives connected therewith, evidences the spread of Solomon's fame, and the far-reaching influence of his activities. Sheba was a port on the eastern or Arabian coast of the Red Sea. For further reference as to the luxury and opulence of Solomon's court, and his industrial and commercial activities, see "History of the Jews" by Graetz—Jewish Publication Society—Vol. I, pp. 162-173; also "The Bible for Learners," Oort and Hooykas, Roberts Bros., Boston, 1880, Vol. II, pp. 70-73. See also "Hours With the Bible," by C. Geikie, Vol. III, pp. 420-437. For an illuminating commentary on Solomon's prayer of dedication, see "The Bible For Home Reading," by C. G. Montefiore, McMillan & Co., 1896, Part I, pp. 288-292. For information as to the architecture of Jewish houses of worship, see Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, article "Synagogue," pp. 619-640. Follow up the list of illustrations given on p. 640. It will prove very interesting to the class to inform them as to the various styles of synagogues as built by Jews in many lands, and during the time from Solomon to the present day.

Lesson Material

Solomon's First Care After Peace Secured

Having put his kingdom in order, and subdued his foes both within and without its borders, Solomon turned his attention to the development of the material resources of his realm. He encouraged the people to trade with other nations, both those near and those at a distance. He made treaties with neighboring kings, especially with Hiram, King of Tyre, on his north, and with Egypt on the south. With the help of these two he opened up the highways that led northward through Syria, and southward through the Arabian desert to the northernmost point of the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

His Commerce by Land and Sea

At Ezion-Geber (see map) he established a fine port and shipyards and built great ships that went as far as India and brought back great cargoes of spices, perfumes, costly woods, precious stones, silks and ivory. In partnership with Hiram he sailed ships from the ports of Palestine over the Mediterranean Sea as far as Spain (see map). The people became prosperous and rich. It is said that Solomon "made silver as stones in the streets of Jerusalem." (I Kings X: 27.)

Material Condition of the Country

Solomon himself became very rich and lived in very luxurious style, with many wives and hundreds of servants and followers. He built for himself a magnificent palace. It took six years to build it. But the greatest work he accomplished was the building of the temple. His father, David, had wished to build a temple unto God. He said: "Behold, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the Lord is under curtains." (I Chron. XVII:1.) However, Nathan the prophet had told him that it was not God's wish that he should build it. So David contented himself with gathering gold and silver to help pay for it. Now Solomon was to build it. The gold and silver were there, but the wood and stone were not.

The Building of the Temple

Solomon made an agreement with Hiram, the king of Tyre, to furnish the mighty cedars of Lebanon. Solomon sent him laborers, who, with Hiram's men, cut down the beautiful trees in the forests of Lebanon, and sent them to Jerusalem. It took seven years to build the temple. One hundred and fifty thousand laborers, with 30,000 overseers, worked upon it. (I Kings VI: 38.) Finally it was finished. It was furnished in great beauty with gold and silver ornaments

and vessels of service, with precious stones and rich cloths and silken curtains.

Its Parts

Like the tabernacle, the sanctuary that was made to be carried in the desert, the main features of the temple were two courts. The inner court contained the holy of holies, and its treasures, and the altar of incense; the outer court, the larger one, contained the large altar for burnt offerings and the laver for the washing of priests. To these King Solomon added still another court, the court of the strangers; also many rooms and towers for various purposes, and a covered passage that led to the king's palace. (Here take picture and explain the various parts of the temple and their uses. You may also add some figures as to the dimensions of the various courts and buildings.)

The Feasting

When the Temple was completed, Solomon assembled the people for a great festival of rejoicing and dedication. It was the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, and in addition to the people of Israel, great crowds from neighboring nations attended. Thousands of sheep and oxen were sacrificed. The feasting and rejoicing lasted a full week.

The Removal of the Ark

The first act was that of bringing the Ark of the Covenant and the ancient altars and implements from the tabernacles at Gideon. These were borne on the shoulders of Levites, amidst the singing and loud rejoicing of the people, and placed in their proper places. Then the "holy of holies," the inner court and the vessels were sanctified by Solomon and consecrated to the service of God.

The Prayer of Dedication

When this was done, Solomon appeared before the door of the temple, and in the presence of all the

people, offered up a beautiful prayer of dedication. (Here read portions of this prayer, pointing out the spiritual beauty, the generous breadth and the deep reverence that pervade it. See I Kings VIII, vs. 27-30; 38-39; 41-43; 46-53 inclusive. See also reference given on p. 242 to "Bible for Home Study.")

The Visit of the Queen of Sheba

Solomon's fame spread far and wide. He was visited by foreign kings and princes, who came to see the wonderful buildings he had built and to become acquainted with the man whose wisdom was reputed to be so great. Among the visitors was the Queen of Sheba. (Locate Sheba on the map, approximately.) She came with a large retinue of servants and followers, and with many rich and magnificent presents. She was very cordially received by King Solomon, who entertained her in royally munificent manner. She asked many questions and examined carefully into all he had done. When she was about to leave, she said that much as she had heard of Solomon, his wisdom and his works, not half had been told her. (For the legends associated with the building of the Temple and the visit of the Queen of Sheba, see "Legends of the Jews," by Ginzberg, Jewish Publication Society, Vol. IV pp. 142-149 and 154-169, and "Legends of Patriarchs and Prophets," by S. Baring-Gould, pp. 351-364.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

The Command That Solomon Disobeyed

In the laws of Moses, it was commanded (Deuteronomy XVII: 14-18) that when the people of Israel should come into the land of Palestine, and choose a king for themselves, the king should not enrich himself too greatly at the expense of the people. He should not acquire too many horses, nor take for himself too many wives, nor gather too much gold and silver. King

Solomon disobeyed this command in all its three particulars. So, tradition says, God punished him in this manner. In the building of the temple, Solomon had great trouble in fitting the stones from the quarry into the building, because as the Torah had commanded that no tool should be used in building an altar (Exodus XX: 22), so no tool was to be used in the shaping of the stones of the temple building. The scholars told Solomon that Moses had used the Shamir, which was a stone harder than all other stones (See Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI: pp. 229-230), and which, simply laid upon another stone split it open, as the leaves of a book. This stone was to be obtained through the demon Asmodeus, who knew of its whereabouts. In order to obtain it, Solomon captured Asmodeus, by means of his magic signet-ring, engraved with the name of God, and had him brought to Jerusalem.

His Punishment

After the temple was finished, Solomon kept Asmodeus captive. One day Asmodeus got the magic ring away from Solomon by means of a trick. Then the demon seized Solomon and flung him a thousand miles away from Jerusalem. Asmodeus then palmed himself off as king. Far from his home, among strangers and in foreign lands, Solomon wandered about as a beggar. People laughed at him when he said he was Solomon, king of Jerusalem, and called him a lunatic. For three years Solomon wandered about as a beggar from land to land, atoning for the sins which he had committed, the sins of arrogance, pride and greed.

His Return to His Throne

At the end of that time, God took mercy upon him. Solomon had wandered to a city by the seashore. There he got a fish to serve for his supper. On open-

ing the fish he found in it the magic ring which Asmodeus had thrown into the sea, and which the fish had swallowed. With a cry of joy, Solomon seized the ring, placed it upon his finger, transported himself to Jerusalem, drove Asmodeus out and became king again.

The Lesson to Him

It is to be hoped that King Solomon learned his lesson, the lesson that, after all, the real worship of God is not in the building, but in the heart of the worshipper. Solomon had built a magnificent temple to God. It was the most magnificent building which the Jews up to that time, and for many years afterward, had ever had. But all its beauty, magnificence and richness were as nothing, if the hearts of the king and his people did not feel the presence of God and seek to obey His commandments.

And to Us

It was a lesson not only to King Solomon. It should be one to us also. We have built many handsome synagogues in this country. In many of our cities the synagogue ranks with the finest buildings in the town. It is often a show-place to visitors. While it is very nice, and is good in its way, in showing that the people were willing to, and did give of their means for the building thereof, yet it does not carry out its true purpose if it serves only as an object of pride and for show. A synagogue may be ever so rich and beautifully furnished and decorated, yet it is not a house of true worship unless the prayers sounded therein come from the humble hearts and contrite spirits of the people. It is to be hoped that the people of Israel will never lose the Kingdom of their priesthood in God's service, by forgetting the fact that a synagogue is not the end of religious activity, but simply a means of earnest, reverent worship and sincere prayer. A Rab-

binic maxim says: "The All-merciful desires the heart," and another one, that "prayer without devotion is like a body without a soul."

Summary

The emphasis of the summary is to be laid, as the aim of the lesson and the lesson presentation indicate, upon the thought that whatever was Solomon's credit in building the temple, it was not real virtue because many of his actions were weak and sinful. (Additional Bible texts may be used to illustrate this point, e. g., Jeremiah IX; 22-23; Ps. XXXIV: 19; Ps. IV: 6. Recall Samuel's saying, I Samuel XV: 22, etc., etc.)

Relieving the Tension

This lesson can be made intensely interesting by frequent reference to the map and to the illustration of Solomon's temple. Trace the courses of Solomon's caravans and his maritime ventures. Locate the places mentioned. Dwell upon the beauty of the cedars of Lebanon, upon the extent of the king's commerce by land and sea.

Home Work

Wilde's Pictures No. 384. Tissot's No. 93. Ask the pupils to draw maps or mould them in clay or putty, likewise to bring in pictures (post-card or others), of various synagogues, here and abroad. Ask them to study up about the "wailing-place" in Jerusalem today, and its association with the temple of Solomon. Have them learn Psalm 84, beginning with the words: "How lovely are Thy dwelling-places, O Lord." Let them memorize the following lines and tell to what they have reference.

"No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung,
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."

QUESTIONS

Describe the effects of the building of the palace and the temple—

1. Politically.
2. Industrially.
3. Commercially.
4. Religiously.
5. What was the nature of the association of Solomon and Hiram of Tyre?
6. Did it differ from that of Solomon with the King of Egypt.
7. Aside from the legendary aspects of it, what real significance was there in the visit of the Queen of Sheba?
8. What animal was used for transport and pleasure-riding prior to Solomon's introduction of horses? Note a passage from a previous lesson for proof.
9. What was the position of the laborers who did the work on the buildings?
10. How do you account for the fact that Solomon, and not the priests, performed the functions of sanctification and gave the prayer of dedication? See I Kings VIII: 63-64.)

Lesson XX

The Close of Solomon's Reign—Review

Lesson XX. THE CLOSE OF SOLOMON'S REIGN—REVIEW

Required Reading—I Kings IX-XI.

Memory Verse—"Behold, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. I:7.)
"Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl. XII:13.)

Aim of the Lesson

To teach that there is no permanent power or lasting good in anything that is not founded on righteousness. Material wealth, physical strength, intellectual ability, are all instruments of power that have the possibilities of great achievement, but unless their use is guided by moral and righteous motives, or informed with honorable purpose, their accomplishment cannot endure, nor bring happiness and peace of mind. So-called worldly success may be applauded by man, but it is not always the truest success, nor the best use of life's gifts and opportunities, "for man looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh into the heart." (I Sam. XVI:7.)

Teacher's Preparation

The reign of Solomon was a momentous one for the people of Israel; indeed more so than that of King David, though for a different reason. David's exploits marked the military supremacy of the nation, Solomon's its industrial and commercial. The two made the Israelitish state a factor to be reckoned with, gave it a place among the world powers of the age.

Significance of Solomon's Reign

Wherein David's Greatness Lay

As David's strength lay in his martial genius, so that of Solomon rested in his intellectual acumen. He is famed for wisdom, but in the final analysis his wisdom was not such as to bring permanent power or happiness to his people. It was worldly, materialistic wisdom that was brilliant and dazzling, but had not in it the source of genuine power. (See Job's apostrophe to wisdom, XXVIII: 12-28, and note the crowning verse, 28.)

Contrast Between Solomon and David

Solomon, despite his brilliant gifts, lacked the spiritual quality of David. The people no doubt felt this, though they were unable to define or express it.

Solomon is famed as a sage, as David is famed as a singer. This tells the difference. For the sage appeals to the intellect, the singer to the heart.

Nature of Reign

Solomon's reign was anti-climactic. It began gloriously with the beauty of the vision that was vouchsafed to him (see I Kings III). It proceeded with the building of the temple and the palace, with the defeat of those who rose against him, with the opulence and luxury of his court. It ended in the disaffection and dissatisfaction of the people, and with the seed of rebellion already germinating in this soil of popular discontentment.

Solomon's reign exhibited the phases of his character, its strength and its weakness. He had in him the possibilities of real greatness, but he permitted his powers to be perverted. He sought for help on the outside, in diplomatic treaties, in marital alliances and in political manoeuvres, as though he distrusted the native strength and power of his people. His fate was the fate of those who put their trust in princes. Had he served his God as he did his own kingly interests,

he would not have bequeathed to his successor the legacy of rebellion and division that he did.

Causes of Popular Disaffection

Solomon, himself, was not religiously strong in his later years. He could not therefore strengthen the religious spirit among his people. The fact that he was the offspring of a sin-contaminated marriage, though not his fault, yet was a spiritual handicap that he did nothing to overcome. His many and varied alliances, marital and political, no doubt necessitated his looking with tolerant eye upon the various heathen customs and idolatrous practices that these alliances introduced into the land. These customs and practices unquestionably affected the people, weakened their moral tone, and undermined their religious unity.

The luxurious and extravagant style of living prevailing in the royal household was also an unwholesome influence. Doubtless the figures given (I Kings V: 1-8) are exaggerated, but there is no doubt that the royal court was conducted on a scale of lavishness hitherto undreamed of in Israel.

Solomon's Literary Contributions

The full extent of his permanent contributions to literature is a matter of some doubt. The Bible says he spoke three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs, and that he was wiser than even certain men whose names are given, but concerning whom we know nothing at all. (I Kings V: 1 and 12.) The Book of Proverbs, The Book of Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, some Psalms and some Apocryphal works are ascribed to him.

The Greatest of These

In this connection it may be stated that the best of whatever Solomon may have written, is the prayer of dedication given in I Kings VIII. Here the cynical pessimism of Ecclesiastes, the erotic extravagances of

Canticles, the intellectual morality of Proverbs are all unknown, and the spontaneous outburst of genuine spiritual fervor is apparent, a fervor that, informed with all the high, uplifting, catholic spirit of the Jewish faith, most beautifully expresses it.

Wherein He Failed

The name "Solomon" will doubtless long remain as the synonym for wisdom and perspicacity, for wonderful judgment and for the terse and expressive maxims of conduct, but a study of his life must regretfully bring the conclusion that Solomon failed greatly to measure up to the gifts and possibilities that were granted him. (For further views regarding Solomon, see "Bible for Home Reading," by C. G. Montefiore, Vol. I p. 275 and pp. 288-292; "History of the Jews," by H. Graetz, Vol. I p. 157 and pp. 169-171.)

Lesson Material

Solomon had finished building the Temple and the palace for himself. The many workmen of various kind who had been engaged in these buildings had to be occupied by other things. So Solomon built more buildings for his wives, and the rich people built themselves handsome residences in Jerusalem. Solomon also employed many men in his army and as servants in his household. He organized caravans and built ships and established a great trade between Palestine and other countries, both to the east and the west. The people prospered and grew rich, so that it was a common saying that silver was as stones in the streets of Jerusalem.

Use of Laborers After Completion of Temple

Solomon's Sin

But instead of being grateful for these material blessings that were showered upon him and his people, Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord. He began to believe that these worldly treasures and pleasures made up the main issues of life. He grew proud of

the fame that had come to him, and of the praise and homage that were given him. He increased the splendor of his living. He added many wives to his harem. He levied heavy taxes upon the people to provide luxuries, as well as comforts and necessities, for his tremendous household. His wives turned his heart away from God and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. He took part in the worship of strange gods, and permitted idolatrous practices to be established in order to please his foreign wives. The favor of God was turned from him, for God was displeased with him.

Why He Himself Was Spared

Enemies sprang up against him, but because of David, his father, Solomon was permitted to complete his reign over all Israel. Among those who rose up against him were Hadad the Edomite, who had been living at the court of the King of Egypt; also Rezon the Syrian, who was very troublesome. Besides these two foreign foes, Solomon was troubled by a young man by the name of Jeroboam, of the tribe of Ephraim. Jeroboam was a very able young man and Solomon had appointed him as superintendent in one of his houses.

Jeroboam and Achiyah

One day when Jeroboam had gone outside the city, he met the prophet Achiyah. The two talked over things: over the way that Solomon ruled, and how the people were so heavily taxed that they groaned under the burden. Achiyah, speaking in the prophetic manner, said that God was going to rend the Kingdom of Israel as a garment would be rent. Here he tore his cloak into twelve pieces. He gave Jeroboam the pieces, saying they represented the ten tribes which God would take away from the House of Solomon, and that two of them would remain for the sake of David. Whether Jeroboam took any active steps to carry out the

prophecy of Achiyah, the Bible does not state. It is possible that he did, or it may be that Solomon heard of this conversation, for he sought to put Jeroboam to death. But Jeroboam fled into Egypt and remained there in hiding until Solomon passed away. This took place after Solomon had reigned forty years, like his father David. Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David.

Lesson Presentation

Point of Contact

The sun and the wind once had a dispute as to which was the stronger. Each claimed, with many words and arguments, the palm for itself. Finally they agreed to put it to the test. A traveller was seen walking along the highway. He was wrapped in a large cloak, and it was agreed that whichever of the two would the more quickly deprive the traveller of his cloak, would be acknowledged the winner. The wind began the contest. At first he blew with mild breezes. The traveller seemed grateful for the air and walked along with quickened step, with his head and throat bared to the breeze, but his cloak undisturbed. The wind blew a little harder. The traveller bent his head, replaced his hat, drew his cloak a little more closely and went on his way. The wind blew still harder. The traveller continued. The wind blew still harder till it became a gale. The traveller drew his cloak the more closely about him and continued on his way. Then the wind got angry and sent its most terrific blasts. It howled and whistled. It whipped the surface of the sea into foam. It caused the huge waves to thunder on the shore. It shook the houses till they rattled. It raised great clouds of dust on the roadway. It stripped the trees of their leaves and sent many branches crashing to the ground. It hurled itself against the traveller till he had simply to fight his way with head and

shoulder against it. It sought to tear his cloak from him. It got under the folds and tried to bear it away. It caused the ends to flap wildly and try to tear loose. But the traveller buttoned it the more closely to him, held it the more firmly as he breasted his way onward. Finally, after roaring and whistling and howling and blowing as hard as it could, the wind gave up. The traveller had kept his cloak.

Then the sun tried. The wind died down. The clouds broke away. The sea and the forest became still. The sun shone gently and the traveller was grateful for the warmth and pleasantness. The sun shone a little stronger. The traveller continued on his way, but he unbuttoned his cloak and threw it open. The sun continued to grow warmer, stronger and hotter, till its rays seemed like those from a glowing furnace. The traveller tried to keep his way, but the heat penetrated and weakened him. The perspiration dripped from every pore. Each step became more difficult till, finally throwing off his cloak, he sought refuge under the shade of a tree by the roadside.

Adversity Versus Prosperity

The sunshine of prosperity and luxury was too much for King Solomon. It caused him to cast aside the garment of religion and to forsake the path of duty. It is unhappily true that there are many people who are like Solomon in this respect. When the winds of adversity and misfortune blow upon them, they wrap themselves in the garment of their religion, and in the shelter of faith find protection against the storms that fall upon us on life's highway. But when the sky is clear overhead, and when the sun shines brightly and all things go happily and smoothly for them, these people forget their God who had sustained them in the

hours of their trial and sorrow. They cast aside the cloak of religious duty and observance.

Prayer and Praise

Lips that pray for help often forget to praise for happiness.

The sinfulness of this conduct we see in the case of Solomon. When he began his reign and the burden of responsibility and care rested heavily upon his shoulders, he sought God in his trouble and humbly turned his heart to Him, seeking for His help. But when God had abundantly blessed him, had given him wisdom and power, so that he became great and rich and famous, Solomon's humility gave way to pride, his heart was turned from God and trouble and disaster followed.

The Weakness in Solomon's Wisdom

The wisdom of Solomon did not save him when he turned from God, because real wisdom rests upon reverence, and the finest understanding is that which recognizes the goodness and power of God. The Bible writers well understood this (recall memory gems), and the Psalmist again well says (127: 1) "unless the fear of the Lord be present in the building of a house, they that build it labor in vain." Solomon had built a house of richness and fame, but forgetting the fear of the Lord, this house tumbled in ruins.

Summary

The review of this particular lesson should serve as the capstone of the entire course (as given in the Lesson Material), showing how the history of the first 200 years of residence in Canaan had produced a national structure, strong, rich and imposing, which, however, crumbled when the luxury and evil example of Solomon undermined its moral foundation.

In making the review, have the pupils fill in the details of the sketch as you proceed with it.

Relieving the Tension

Wilde's Bible Pictures Nos. 487, 588, 618 and 619. Divide the course into a number of parts equal to the number of pupils in the class. Assign to each pupil a part to be brought in at the next lesson as a written essay of 100 or 200 words in length. Have the pupils stand in line in the order of the parts assigned and each reading his essay in turn will give a consecutive history of the course.

Home Work

The death of Solomon closes the first period in the history of the Jewish people as a united nation. As you will learn, very shortly after the death of Solomon the northern tribes revolted and established an independent kingdom, known as the Kingdom of Israel, while the house of David continued to reign over the southern portion, known as the Kingdom of Judah.

Review

This first period covers the time from the death of Joshua unto the death of Solomon, in all about 200 years in time, perhaps a little more. At the beginning of this period we have the Judges, from Othniel to Eli, who led the people in times of trial and emergency, but who did not make much headway in uniting the tribes together as a whole. There are evidences, however, that a spirit of national unity was beginning to make itself felt among the tribes.

The First Period of National Power
The Judges

With the leadership of Samuel, this spirit of national cohesion becomes more and more apparent. It was fostered by Samuel chiefly by means of the sentiment of their religious unity. Samuel was a great religious teacher and he journeyed from tribe to tribe throughout the land, reminding the people of all the

Samuel

tribes of their common origin, their common faith and their common hope. He organized schools of prophets, and this served, too, to deepen the religious spirit among the peoples. The sense of union became strong enough to overcome tribal jealousies, and they demanded a king of Samuel. Though reluctant to do so, Samuel finally acceded to their request and annointed Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was a good man and a good warrior, but he was not strong enough in character to be a great leader or the founder of a dynasty. He made the mistake of yielding to his own moods and fancies, instead of fighting them off and manifesting self-control.

David

A strong man was needed, and found in David, the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. David became a member of Saul's household by marriage to his daughter, and was the dear friend of his son, Jonathan. But this did not save him from the danger of Saul's moods of jealousy. He fled from the land, taking refuge with various neighboring kings and gathering about himself quite a band of followers. After a vain pursuit of some time, Saul gave up his attempt upon David. Upon the former's death, David was acclaimed king by his own followers and by his tribe, Judah. After six or seven years of division, the land was again united and David reigned over all Israel. He was a very successful warrior, and by the subjugation of Israel's enemies roundabout, especially their ancient foe, the Philistines, he established the kingdom upon a basis of security. His life was filled with many adventures and turns of fortune, and he himself was guilty of great sins, but on the whole he was one of the strongest men whom history records, and despite his sins, was a deeply religious man, whose heart was turned in re-

pentance toward God, and whose spirit was fervent and earnest in adoration of the Most High.

Solomon

He was succeeded by Solomon, who added industrial and commercial achievement to David's military glory. His reign was characterized by great building operations, by much pomp and luxury. But this worldly supremacy and prosperity seemed to be the crest of the wave of this first national movement. For practically immediately thereafter it broke, and it was many, many years before the people of Israel again presented a united front to the world.

QUESTIONS

1. Character of Solomon's reign—what was it?
2. How did it differ from that of David?
3. How did this difference reflect the difference in the character of the men themselves?
4. What were the causes of popular disaffection that came at the close of his reign?
5. What was the religious aspect of Solomon's reign?
6. What causes led to this state of affairs?
7. What are presumed to be Solomon's literary monuments?
8. What is the best of his productions?

9. Can you give any reason why Achiyah should have virtually plotted against Solomon, or rather against his dynasty?

10. How do you account for Pharaoh's sheltering Solomon's enemies, in view of his alliance?

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